CYCLE GUIDE

PREVIEW '85

DECEMBER 1984 $1.75

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PREVIEW

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Italian Currency Devalued Against U.S. Dollar

WORLD FAMOUS GHIBLI HELMET TO BE SOLD FOR $69 A PIECE DURING MAMMOTH PUBLICITY DRIVE

THIS IS NOT *A MISPRINT*

The Italian manufacturer of the famous **Ghibli Motorcycle Helmet** was so pleased with the publicity campaign held earlier this year, that he has agreed to offer a shipment of **20,000 Ghibli Helmets** at the same price reduction, in a further move to gain market share and help convert Italian manufactured goods to **valuable U.S. dollars.**

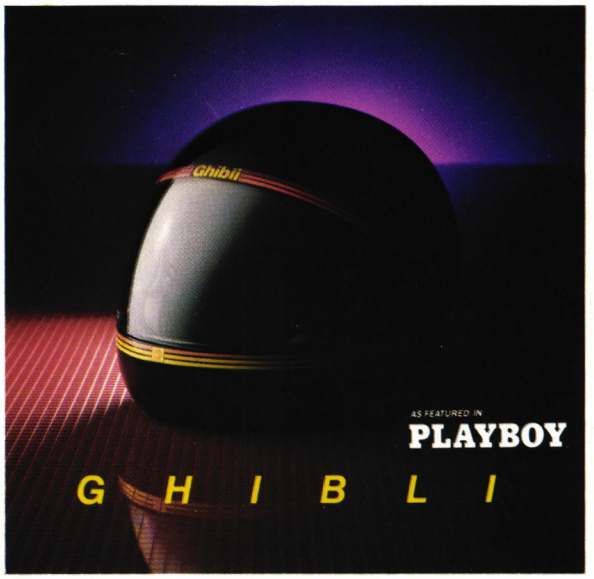
All who wish to apply for a GHIBLI HELMET should write to the company address below before Midnight, January 31, 1985

Special Note: The previous promotion of this helmet was a complete sell out - so act now for best color selection.

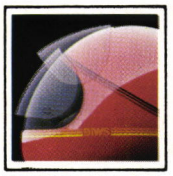
NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA

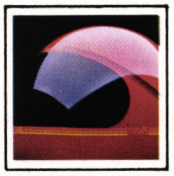
Thousands of new GHIBLI Motorcycle helmets, with lever activated, three (3) position flip shield and patented *"Easy Action"* quick release chin strap, will be sold as part of a giant publicity campaign for only *$69 apiece to the first twenty thousand who write or call the company before midnight, Jan. 31st, 1985.

These are the same famous Ghibli Helmets that retail for over $110 each and were featured in the pages of ***Playboy magazine, Ultralight, Cycle World, Cycle Guide, Rider*** and other leading magazines and referred to as ***"the first totally new helmet to come along in a decade".***



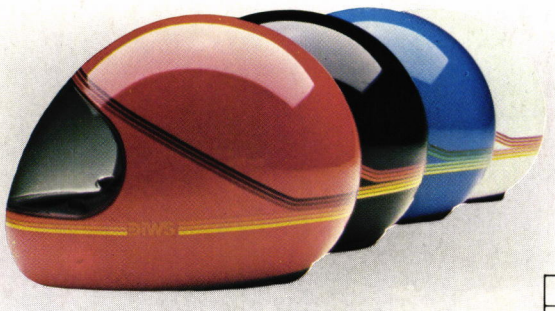
LEVER ACTION: Simply push the lever and the shield opens in one smooth, single hand operation.


THREE POSITION SHIELD: Precision molded flip shield will lock into any of three positions.


NO WHISTLING: Outer shell is completely streamlined, eliminating wind and water leakage.

QUICK RELEASE STRAP: "Easy Action" chin strap, simpler to fasten or release than any other type of chin strap.

Weighing less than many open faced helmets, the Ghibli still exceeds all National and International government safety standards, including **D.O.T.** and is fully approved for use in all **AMA sanctioned** motorcycle competition events. At the same time, Ghibli includes features never before available on motorcycle helmets. Features such as flush mounted *"3-position"* face shield that eliminates whistling and wind noise. A quick-release chin strap mechanism, which enables helmet removal, even with bulky gloves on.



Colors: Monza Blue, Alpine White
Ferrari Red, Onyx Black

These GHIBLI Helmets will not be sold at this price by this company in any store. To obtain one at this price, apply in writing or by telephone to the company no later than midnight, January 31, 1985.

Each helmet carries a *full one-year warranty.* There is a limit of (2) helmets per address at these prices, but requests mailed or called in early enough (before Jan. 15th, 1985) are permitted to order up to 4 helmets.

To apply for a new Ghibli Helmet, mail this original printed notice (or a copy) together with your name and address and *$69 for each helmet, plus only $4. for shipping and handling no matter how many helmets you request. Calif. residents add 6% sales tax. Replacement shield in tint or clear, only $9.

Mail to:
GHIBLI HELMET PROMOTION
3857 Birch St., Dept. CG-3
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Phone Orders may be called in Mon. - Fri., between 8 A.M. - 5 P.M. Western time.
NATION
1-714-547-5702
OUTSIDE CALIFORNIA
1-800-621-9183

NOTE: Payment may be made by **Visa, Mastercard, American Express** or Money Order. Personal checks require 4 weeks for bank clearance. Do not send cash.

GHIBLI SIZING CHART	
HEAD MEASURE	**HELMET SIZE**
21 3/4" to 22 1/4"	Small
22 3/8" to 23"	Medium
23 1/8" to 23 5/8"	Large
23 3/4" to 24 1/4"	X-Large

*These are promotional prices **only** and therefore are good only thru the dates and times listed above. For up to date prices after January 31, 1985 write or call company direct.

CYCLE GUIDE

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ON THE COVER:
A quick peak through the keyhole of 1985 provides a glimpse of the future. You can get more than a glimpse of this year's objets d'motolust by turning to page 19.

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QUOTE:
"Imagine, on really bad handlers, the guy in front could force the monster down— leaning outward—and the guy in back could drag his knee. That's racing."

—Pg. 8

CYCLE GUIDE'S CYCLE GUIDE

Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Cagiva WRX 250-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.1/11.6	232	30.0/4.65	6
Cagiva WMX 250-'84	January '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.7	221	28.0/4.65	6
Can-Am 320 Trials-'84	October '84	Trials	Two-stroke	4.8/4.5	205	25.5/3.00	6
Can-Am Sonic MX-'83	January '83	Motocross	Four-stroke	11.6/12.1	272	28.0/4.24	5
Honda ATC250R-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.8/8.0	311	N/A	5
Honda CR125R-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.3	195	27.2/4.29	6
Honda CR250R-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	216	26.7/4.13	5
Honda CR500R-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	12.0/12.5	228	27.2/4.25	5
Honda XR200R-'84	August '84	Enduro	Four-stroke	9.9/9.6	235	26.0/4.13	6
Honda XR350R-'83	June '83	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.9/10.4	253	26.0/3.94	6
Honda XR500R-'83	October '83	Desert	Four-stroke	11.0/12.2	278	25.5/3.94	5
Husqvarna 250CR-'83	January '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.7	227	30.0/5.51	6
Husqvarna 400WR-'84	July '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.0/11.2	242	28.5/5.16	6
Husqvarna 500CR-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.8	240	30.0/5.51	4
Husqvarna 500XC-'83	October '83	Desert	Two-stroke	11.7/12.8	245	30.0/5.98	6
Kawasaki KXT250 Tecate-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.6/8.2	319	N/A	5
Kawasaki KDX200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.9	214	28.0/4.76	6
Kawasaki KDX250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	232	29.0/5.00	6
Kawasaki KX125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	195	27.5/4.57	6
Kawasaki KX250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	220	28.5/4.65	5
Kawasaki KX500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/11.9	232	29.0/4.80	5
Kawasaki KLR600-'84	September '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.2/8.3	322	29.5/4.80	5
KTM MC 495-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.4	249	28.0/4.21	4
Maico 490 Spider-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.2	240	27.0/4.72	4
M-Star 250 Supercross-'84	Nov./Dec. '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.7	230	27.0/4.72	5
Suzuki ALT50-'83	June '83	ATV	Two-stroke	N/A	90	N/A	1
Suzuki Quadrunner 250-'84	October '84	ATV	Four-stroke	1.0/N/A	384	N/A	5
Suzuki RM125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.5/12.4	190	29.5/4.84	6
Suzuki RM250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.9	220	27.8/4.41	5
Suzuki RM500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.8	234	29.7/4.84	4
Yamaha IT200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.6	211	28.0/4.53	6
Yamaha XT250-'84	Nov./Dec. '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.7/7.9	266	28.3/4.60	6
Yamaha YZ125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.3	194	27.7/4.57	6
Yamaha YZ250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.6	214	28.0/4.69	5
Yamaha YZ490-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.7	227	28.5/4.72	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R100RS-'84	October '84	2C/G	979.9	13.425/95.84	111	506	45–57	163
BMW K100RS-'84	October '84	4I/G	987.2	12.381/109.48	133	532	39–54	139
H-D FXRS Low Glide-'84	January '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.917/94.57	112	575	38–48	140
H-D FXRT Sport Glide-'85	October '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	14.180/90.36	92	640	28–51	126
H-D FLTC Tour Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	14.603/88.75	107	774	39–54	152
H-D XLS Roadster-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.842/93.94	106	515	43–55	138
H-D XLX-61-'83	June '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.459/95.94	106	488	40–72	128
Honda GL1200A Aspencade-'84	March '84	4C/G	1181.9	13.156/98.14	118	744	33–46	141
Honda Nighthawk 650-'83	December '82	4A/G	656.0	12.287/108.04	122	451	29–51	127
Honda Nighthawk S-'84	February '84	4A/G	696.7	12.048/109.75	125	492	28–45	125
Honda VF400F-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/F	399.1	13.588/96.35	112	402	34–51	127
Honda VF500F Interceptor-'84	July '84	90 deg. 4D/F	497.6	12.484/106.00	126	419	33–48	123
Honda VF700F Interceptor-'84	October '84	90 deg. 4D/F	698.9	12.323/106.50	124	512	37–48	136
Honda VF750F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.890/114.64	140	511	23–39	127
Honda VF1000F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	998.4	11.121/123.45	150	536	23–45	125
Honda V45 Sabre-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/G	748.1	12.179/111.11	128	514	33–46	130
Honda VT500 Ascot-'83	October '83	52 deg. 2D/G	490.9	13.628/93.75	112	411	41–61	129
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/G	749.6	12.906/100.78	127	484	48–55	132
Kawasaki GPz550-'84	July '84	4A/F	553.8	12.559/105.38	123	436	32–59	136
Kawasaki GPz750-'84	May '84	4A/F	739.0	12.114/110.97	135	502	37–47	120
Kawasaki GPz750 Turbo-'83	July '83	4A/F	739.0	11.225/123.53	146	514	N/A	N/A
Kawasaki GPz1100-'84	May '84	4A/F	1089.9	11.312/120.80	145	560	24–48	120
Kawasaki KZ700-'84	August '84	4A/F	694.9	12.433/107.01	127	483	39–53	132
Kawasaki Ninja-'84	May '84	4A/F	908.2	11.181/123.62	146	523	24–44	126
Kawasaki Voyager-'84	March '84	6A/G	1286.1	13.346/97.61	116	882	28–44	142
Laverda RGS 1000-'84	December '83	3A/F	980.8	12.565/106.50	130	556	25–40	140
Suzuki GS550ES-'84	July '84	4A/F	572.3	12.675/103.68	123	444	30–51	135
Suzuki GS750E-'83	August '83	4A/F	747.4	11.893/112.92	131†	485	35–50	135
Suzuki GS1150ES-'84	October '84	4A/F	1135.4	11.268/122.44	148	542	26–51	122
Suzuki GV700GL Madura-'85	Nov./Dec. '84	82 deg. 4D/G	698.5	13.307/102.15	111	546	23–45	143
Yamaha RZ350-'84	July '84	2A/F††	347.4	13.529/97.61	111	357	26–53	122
Yamaha RZ500-'84	September '84	4D/F††	499.7	12.053/112.64	136	439	25–37	N/A
Yamaha FJ600-'84	July '84	4A/F	598.8	12.468/105.63	126	435	32–50	129
Yamaha FJ1100-'84	June '84	4A/F	1097.6	10.992/124.48	146	535	27–46	121
Yamaha 920 Virago-'83	April '83	75 deg. 2D/G	920.0	12.835/101.46	108	503	38–45	138
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	March '84	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	12.759/101.46	124	752	37–53	137

***A**-Transverse Vertical, **B**-Vertical (single-cylinder only), **C**-Horizontally Opposed, **D**-Tandem Vee, **E**-Transverse Vee, **F**-Chain Final Drive, **G**-Shaft Final Drive, **H**-Belt Final Drive, **I**-Horizontal Longitudinal

† indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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FINALLY, A MOTORCYCLE HELMET DESIGNED BETTER THAN MOST MOTORCYCLES.

For the last ten years, motorcycle styling has been progressing rapidly. And all the while, motorcycle helmet styling has been staying just about where it was when the first full-face helmets were introduced.

Sure, there have been a few that looked different. But then, not everyone wants to look like Darth Vader.

At Shoei, we wanted to design a helmet that was new, exciting and beautiful. Of course, like all our helmets, it had to be functional.

A lot to ask of most designers.

The perfect task for the master of both form and function—Giorgetto Giugiaro. Designer of such masterpieces as the DeLorean and the BMW M1.

As you can plainly see, Giugiaro has come up with another masterpiece. The Shoei Z-100.

What you can't see are the hours of wind tunnel testing that led to the air damming chin spoiler and superthick shield. A shield that can be opened to one of seven positions with the touch of a finger and closed just as easily. A shield that combines with a seamless mold rib to allow for a square view port and excellent peripheral vision.

The helmet shell itself is built from a combination of Kevlar and fiberglass, making it super-strong yet super-light-weight. Inside, there's a shock absorbing foam liner covered with a ribbed cloth that increases ventilation and keeps the rider cool.

The Shoei Z-100. Beautifully simple. Simply beautiful. SHOEI®

Smoke shield optional.

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WORLD CHAMPION

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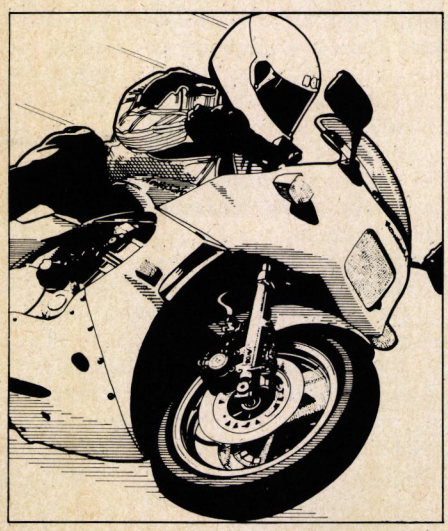

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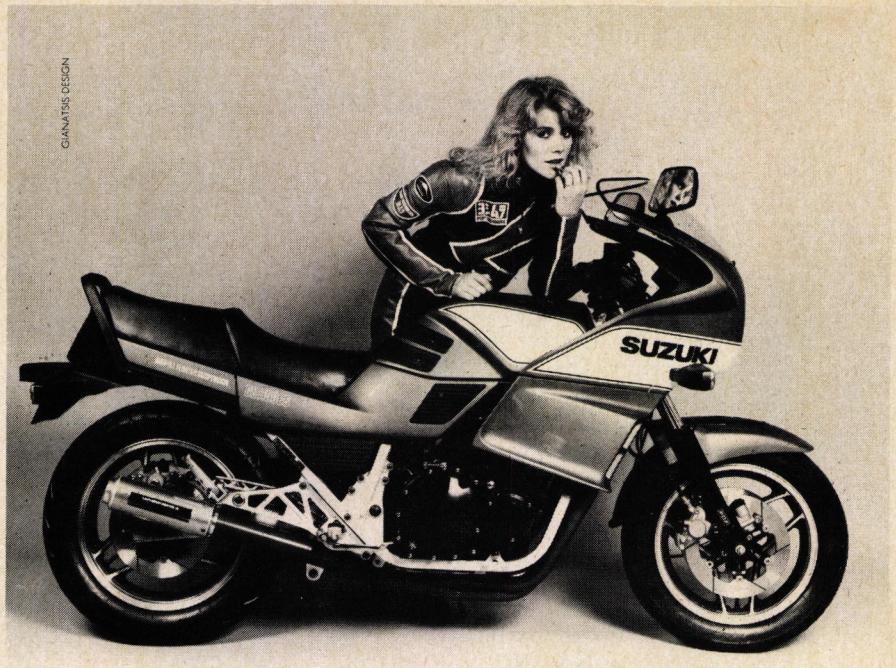

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The hand-crafted construction of our new PRO-Series Exhaust Systems with their trend-setting aluminum canisters were developed and proven on our Championship-winning AMA Superbikes. Available to fit most models of Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha, PRO-Series Exhausts are available in three different versions.

Series VII

Yoshimura's PRO-Series VII RoadRace Exhaust System is designed without compromise to provide maximum cornering clearance on the street or track. Removal of the bike's centerstand is required for installation. Large diameter primary tubes of equal length are dyno tuned to work best on mildly modified to full race motors. Supplied with Medium Street Baffle. **$230.**

Complete RoadRace Systems for Honda VF500, 750 and 1000 Interceptors. **$279.**

Series VIII

Our PRO-Series VIII SuperStreet Exhaust System is designed for the performance-minded street rider who wants light weight and improved cornering clearance over his stock exhaust system, along with the good looks of our competition-bred aluminum canister silencer. The bike's centerstand is retained with access to the oil filter and oil drain plug. Primary tube diameter is tuned to work best over a wide powerband with stock or mildly-modified motors. Supplied with Medium Street Baffle. **$230.**

Slip-Ons

Want the good looks and performance of a racing style exhaust without the added expense of a complete header system? Our new PRO-Series Slip-On Silencers are an easy replacement for stock mufflers while reducing weight and uncorking power! Your stock header section is retained to allow use of the centerstand and access to the oil filter and oil drain plug. **$149/pr.**

When you're ready to build your engine for even more power a set of Yoshimura tuned Mikuni Smoothbore or new style Keihin CR carbs in a full range of sizes are available for all applications.

We also offer a complete line of Stage I camshafts for street use and Stage II camshafts with heavy-duty springs for the track, together with Yoshimura big-bore piston kits.

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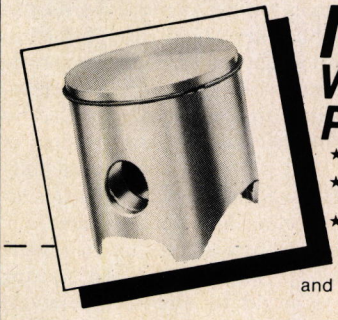

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Thompson at Large

The USTBCS

At last, racing relevance.

• Is there any sight more pathetic than a run-out touring bike? Sagging bags, yellowed windshield, weeping cases, flaky paint—all these signify The End for some once-dignified showboat. You see these rattletraps everywhere now, almost a decade after the first Gold Wing rolled off the Tora-Maru and conquered America. Like '68 Chevys, they'll be around forever, unless someone kills them, or unless they get a new lease on life—which isn't likely, given the technological joyride that even turn-key tourers get from Japan, Inc. So these flagged ships will be with us always.

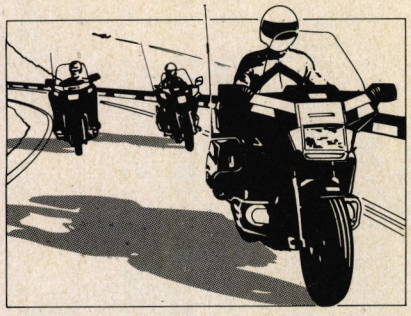
Usually, they show up first in the classifieds. But then, everything dramatic first shows up in the classifieds. ("For Sale: '83 GPz750 Turbo. 650 miles. Helmet, used leathers included. Call room 458, Suburban Hospital.") The tired tourers lose their glitter at about five years and the second owner, and they start reappearing in the same ads, the price getting lower, the mileage higher and the geegaws aboard sillier. By the nine-year mark, you can pick one up for a pittance, especially considering their mechanical worth, if not their cosmetic value. (Although there are plenty of die-hard BMW and Gold Wing owners who figure their bikes are only just broken in and comfy at the 50,000-mile and seven-year mark.)

Even the most dedicated bargain-sniffer could only muster a faint "so what?" to all this if a simple surfeit of touring iron were involved. Luckily, the glut of big bottoms is only the beginning.

The end, see, is on the racetrack.

Nelsons Ledges. Sears Point. Summit Point. Pocono. Willow Springs. Bridgehampton. Riverside. And, naturally, Daytona.

There *is* an explanation. Like Martin Luther King, I have a dream. It visited me most recently after a WERA roadrace at Summit Point, a regional in which the racing was thick and the crowd was sparse. It was ever thus in American club roadracing; it was so in 1967 when I raced with the AFM and it remains so today. Promoters and racers nourish dreams of glory witnessed by the multitudes, while the multitudes stay away in droves. And as long as the racers ride TZ750s or even RZ500s, it will be thus, saith the Book of Eternal Racing Truths, which amplifies for the



ignorant brethren that the reason lieth in the disparity between the multitude's hardware and the racer's hardware, amen.

The Book of NASCAR Truths puts it differently. To get the crowds, the sharp Philistine constructeth the rules to allow only crowdlike racing vehicles. Amen. And goodbye, GPz, hello Gold Wing.

Thus is born The United States Touring Bike Championship. You want thrills? You want relevance? You got 'em. Consider the ramifications: First, now that Ninjas and FJ1100s are so well-tuned to the needs of the racetrack, all those wonderful Z-1 wobbles and slides are history. Yawn. Not so with Voyagers, Gold Wings, Venture Royales, FLHs, Guzzi Californias, BMW RTs: These sweeties would demand the very best from anyone, King Kenny included. So you'd have lower race speeds but racing like you've never seen it before.

One reason is that you'd have two people on each bike. Sidecars being about as relevant to modern motorcycling as Firestone Nonskid tires, we can apply the sidecar team to something that is relevant—our racing touring bike. Imagine, on really bad handlers, the guy in front could force the monster down—leaning outward—and the guy in back could drag his knee. That's racing!

The rules would demand adherence to reality. All bikes would carry ballast in the saddlebags. All would demonstrate compliance with the Radios On rule before taking to the track. Can-Caddys would be checked to insure freedom of swing. And all coolers would be fully iced, although only the fittest back-seaters could get at them during a race.

The potential is staggering. In a single bold sweep, the pathetic old touring trashers could be cleaned from our streets and put where they belong—grinding crashbars in Turn Nine, rear ends wallowing, dicing for all they're worth. A noble end for a proud steed.

The potential for improving the breed is likewise limitless. By demanding that all bikes race two-up and fully loaded, the monster tourers could be made, through the fierce heat of competition, finally to handle beyond a Ninja jockey's wildest dreams. The payoff for street tourers would be sweet revenge: no more backing off in the twisties just because there's a lady on the back, underwear in the bags and Talking Heads in the cassette deck; no more graunched footpegs at embarrassingly low lean angles; no more having to choose between the quick and the capacious in the garage.

All because of the United States Touring Bike Championship, the series that takes motorcycle racing to the very edges of the final frontier of two-wheeled development, and simultaneously rids the nation of the ugly social blight of wretched, run-out rigs.

Beats there a motorcycle racer's heart that does not long to haul an Electra Glide through the chicane at Daytona? Breathes there a tuner whose flow bench does not hyperventilate at the mere notion of tweaking a Voyager to blow off the Beemers down Riverside's straight? Bleeds there a pit-wrench's knuckle that does not yearn for contact with the uncounted, impossible-to-reach nuts waiting on each Venture? And twitches there not a throttle hand on every red-blooded American touring rider who understands the power and the glory of this series, ready to ride any distance, pay any price and bear any burden to support it with his gate-swelling presence?

Of course not. We are not people of a nation that flinches from its historic duty. There is no question that touring-bike racing will come. The question is, will we be leaders in bringing it to life, or followers? Will we allow others to get a head start in the soon-to-be World Series of Touring Bikes? Remember the dark days when Americans could not even qualify for world motocross races, or even finish grand prix roadraces; will we allow that to happen again?

I say no. I say that since America is the natural home of the Touring Bike in all its weighty wonder, it is our manifest destiny to be the true home of touring bike roadracing. The alternative is too painful to contemplate. I mean, Touring Bike Motocross? —*Steve Thompson*

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Setting It Right

Decoupling For Motorcyclists

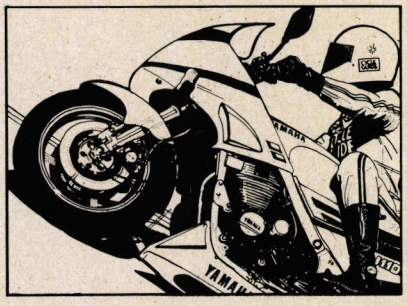
Unraveling the myths of the radial-ply tire.

• Even if you are not much of a motorcyclist, and even less of a driver, your knowledge of cars should enable you to answer the following question. What is the principal advantage of the radial-ply tire? Better handling? Less vibration? More traction? Sharper steering? Stronger cornering? Longer life? Shorter braking? Lower fuel consumption?

If any of those was your answer, you did not read the question carefully enough. None of those answers is necessarily wrong as a statement of fact, mark you, and all but the first two are almost invariably right. Actually, most of them, if offered as an answer, would reveal how little real information there is in advertising copy. Even if one has seen many advertisements for radial-ply tires, one still cannot deduce from their conflicting claims just what the principal virtue of radials might be.

The tire companies, knowing their audience as they do, dare not tell you. They cannot risk using a word which is seldom seen even in adult magazines. That word, however, is the answer to my original question: *decoupling.* Broadly translated, it means isolating each part of a tire according to the job it has to do, so that it can be made most appropriate for that job. In the bias-ply tire, the whole construction is continuous, and the whole tire undertakes all the tasks that a tire must perform, from staying on the wheel to staying on the road. In the radial-ply tire, the annular belt beneath the tread provides the desired lateral and longitudinal rigidity, while the carcass cords which pass radially from bead to bead allow the sidewalls to provide the necessary vertical elasticity. And some radial tires utilize belt cords that slant away from the tire's equatorial plane, one set slanting left and the other right. With the aid of transverse ply cords, the belt is triangulated, and two-plane rigidity achieved.

Even so, there has not yet been a car tire, radial-ply or otherwise, in which decoupling has been so successful as to separate the functions of lateral and longitudinal rigidity. In fact, the car radial only began to approach ideal behavior when Pirelli invented the bandage, a collection of nylon cords stretched truly circumferentially over the belt cords. By confining the belt and preventing distortion, the bandage forced the belt to behave pretty much as a belt should; the sidewalls were then free to do only what they ought. Thus a new generation of vastly improved tires was born, to be emulated by every other manufacturer who could afford a license.



© 1984 TORRY HEEB

Yet when Pirelli's engineers set themselves to make a radial tire for motorcycles, what did they do? Instead of the conceptual beauty of the peerless P-series of car tires, the MP7 for bikes not only lacks the bandage but does not even have truly radial body-ply cords. The sidewalls have two plies, each angled in slight opposition to the other, similar to those in bias-belted tires that we have seen before. Why?

Because they wanted their tires to be suitable for existing motorcycles, for the replacement market as well as for original equipment. It was a simple commercial decision, and as such it was a perfectly valid one. A motorcycle tire of conventional proportions cannot afford as much pliability of the sidewall as a true radial-ply construction allows. Just imagine what would happen when the machine was banked into a corner. . . .

Because the cords of the MP7 are angled, and the belts profiled, to suit their duties better than the cords of bias-ply tires, the MP7 is better than they are. Still, it is not a true radial, for the triangulation had to be maintained—just as it had to be in the first attempt, a decade ago, to build radial-ply properties into a bike tire, the Avon Mudplugger. Once the technological leaders of the industry, Avon superimposed a single ply of radial cords over a conventional 45 degree bias-ply pair: The result was a tire that behaved like a radial in the contact area and like a bias-ply tire everywhere else.

This very imaginative idea worked in what, as its name implied, was a trials tire. Others have made radials for trials since, most successfully during the last four years; but only recently has one of those other manufacturers proclaimed the arrival of a true radial-ply tire for real road-going motorcycles. It was Michelin, and what the firm created was a true and exceptionally pure radial-ply tire, with no diagonal cords at all.

Michelin's belt construction is a bit like Pirelli's bandage without the belts beneath it. There is just one layer of cords, running at 0 degree crown angle—that is, truly circumferentially—but they are made of Kevlar. Since each cord can be considered a hoop, and since the belt is profiled to match the elliptical contour of the tread, it follows that each hoop is different in diameter from its neighbour. Given that stabilizing influence on the cross-sectional shape of the tire, and given the supremely important corollary of shallow sidewalls to inhibit flexure in any but the radial plane, Michelin could then adopt truly 90 degree radial plies of rayon (one in the front tire, two in the rear) for the body construction. Apart from a couple of beads, that is all.

It is the simplest, purest structure since tires were made solid. It gives all the advantages of a radial in the fullest possible measure—grip, economy, stability, speed, response, lightness—with a couple of unfamiliar additions to the list of virtues. One is that the extreme lightness of the belt construction reduces the gyroscopic inertia of the tire by an order of magnitude at least comparable to the one we know resulted from dropping from 18- to 16-inch wheels. The other is that, for reasons not yet explained, it allows strong braking while banked over without interfering with a bike's steering and handling.

What made it possible was another commercial decision. This Michelin is strictly for original equipment only, for machines designed and built specifically to employ it. That is why it could be shaped in an ultra-low 60 percent profile, thus keeping the sidewalls shallow enough for the concept to work.

It does work. Apart from some stiffening in the lower sidewalls close to the rim, the tire is constructionally identical to those gracing the racing Hondas upon which young Mr. Spencer has been proving himself such a Fast Freddie for the past two years. Is that proof enough?

—L.J.K. Setright

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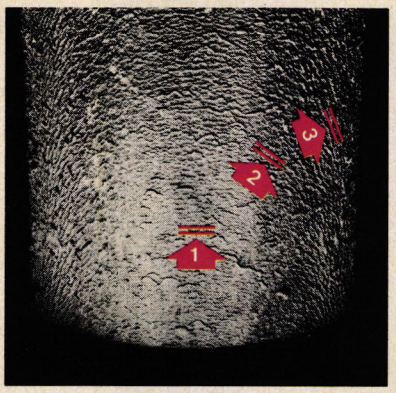
The racing problem, of course, is to get a street legal tire with enough stick to give you the traction and road-holding you need for maximum speed and safety. Rain or shine.

To solve the problem, we turned to the best expert we could find: our own racing slick.

As you can see in the photo, the stresses (or forces) that acted on our slick during a race left ripples on its surface. These ripples run perpendicular to the direction of the forces. And they fall into 3 groups:

1. The forces from acceleration on the straightaway. 2. The forces from acceleration plus cornering on curves. 3. The forces of cornering at full lean.



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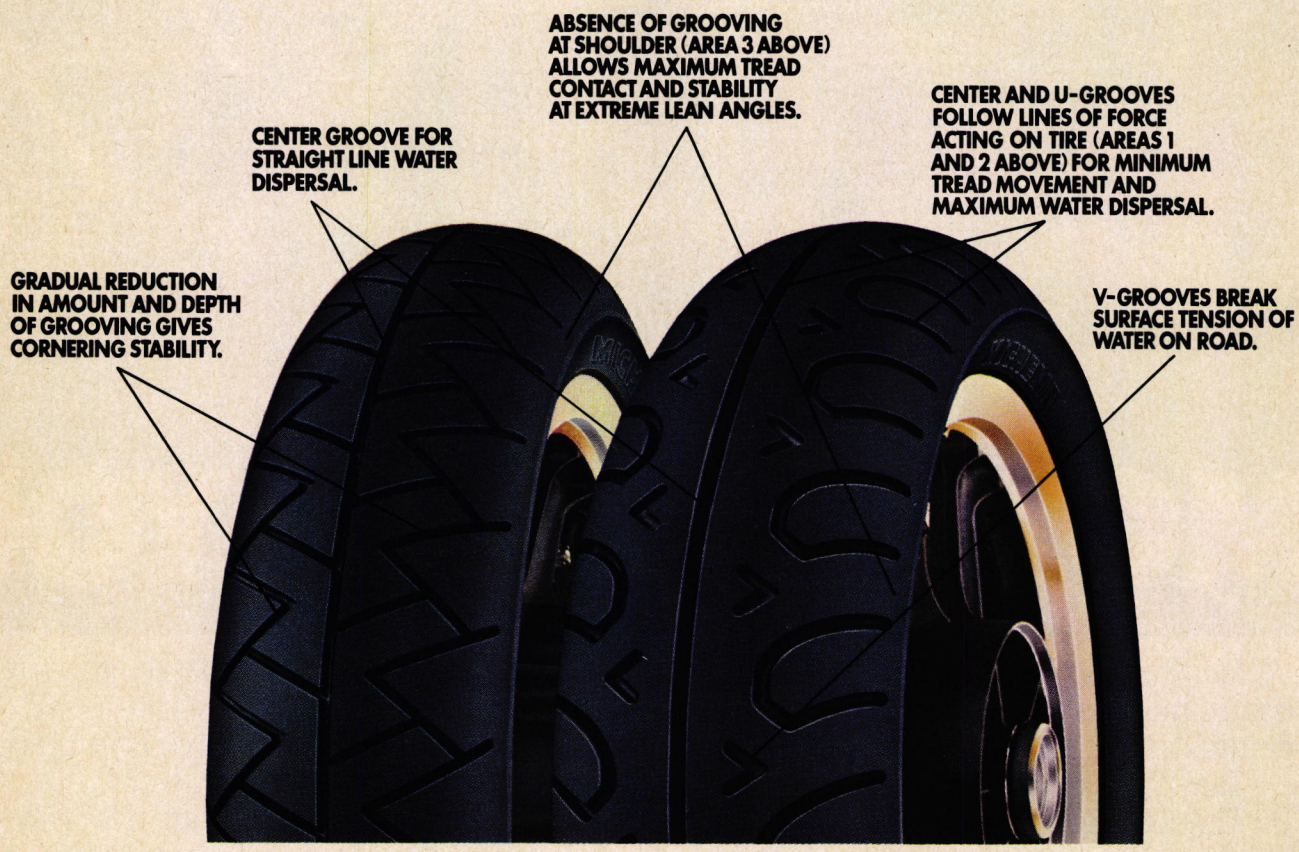
By precisely shaping tread grooves to follow those force lines, we created a new tire that is exceptionally stable and squirm-free under racing stress conditions. Because it squirms less, there's less heat buildup from internal friction. And that, in turn, allows us to use the same soft sticky rubber compound that we have on our slick.

The front tire has many deep grooves at the center for straight line water dispersal at speed. Both tread depth and amount of grooving are progressively reduced toward the shoulder for cornering stability.

On both tires, grooving disappears at the shoulder, more rubber is on the ground, and the tires act like slicks.

INTRODUCING THE MICHELIN HI-SPORT.


ABSENCE OF GROOVING AT SHOULDER (AREA 3 ABOVE) ALLOWS MAXIMUM TREAD CONTACT AND STABILITY AT EXTREME LEAN ANGLES.
CENTER GROOVE FOR STRAIGHT LINE WATER DISPERSAL.
CENTER AND U-GROOVES FOLLOW LINES OF FORCE ACTING ON TIRE (AREAS 1 AND 2 ABOVE) FOR MINIMUM TREAD MOVEMENT AND MAXIMUM WATER DISPERSAL.
GRADUAL REDUCTION IN AMOUNT AND DEPTH OF GROOVING GIVES CORNERING STABILITY.
V-GROOVES BREAK SURFACE TENSION OF WATER ON ROAD.
TF 11 (FRONT)
TG 22 (REAR)

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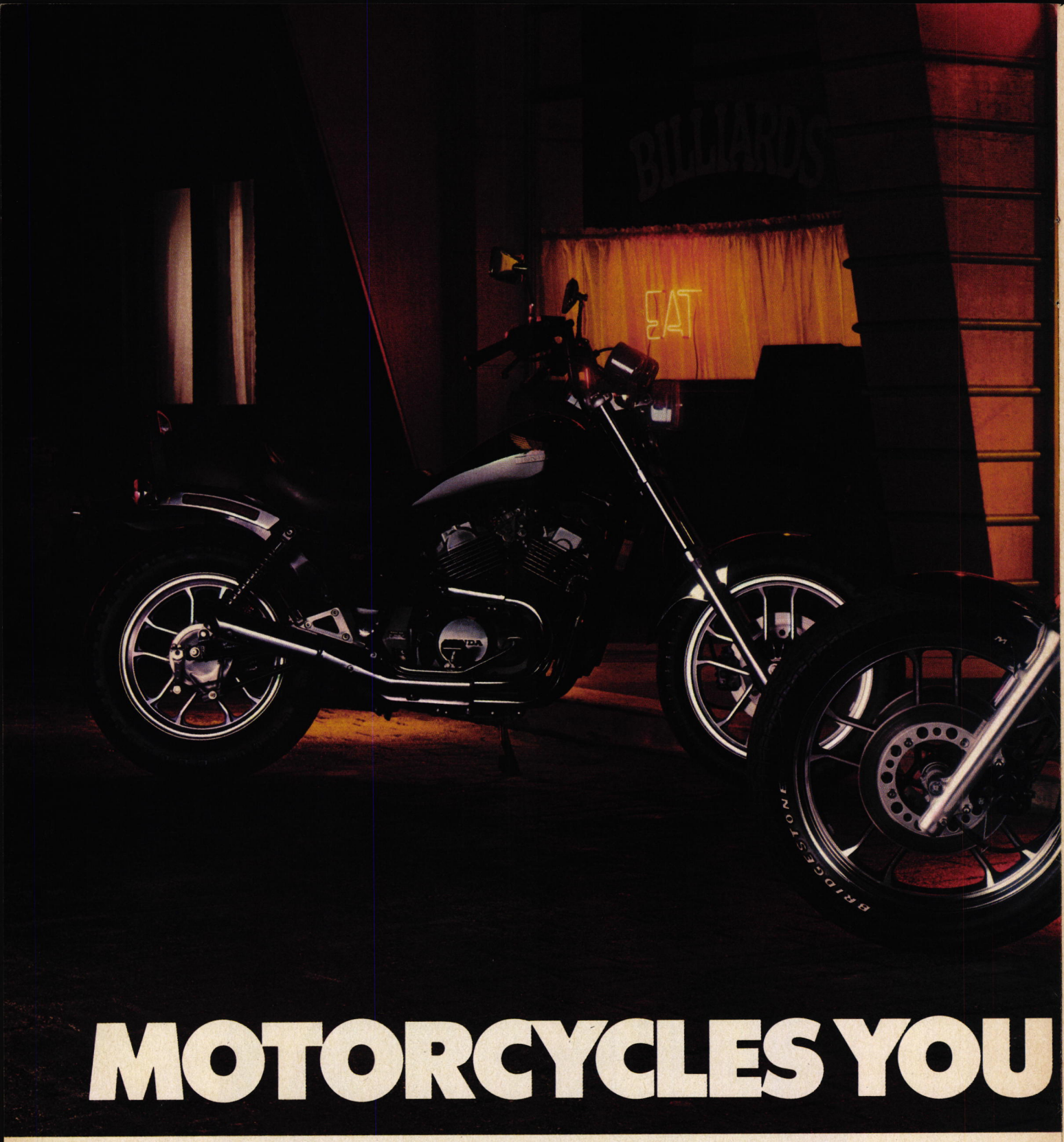

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ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND EYE PROTECTION. The Shadows have a 12-month unlimited mileage warranty. See your local Honda dealer for complete details. Specifications and availability subject to change without

DON'T MESS WITH.

maintenance chores thanks to shaft drive, a solid state ignition and an automatic cam chain tensioner.

In fact, the Shadow even has a self-adjusting hydraulic clutch and a hydraulic valve adjuster system. Which simply means you'll never have to adjust the valves. Another Honda exclusive.

Both bikes deliver great handling and come with fully-adjustable suspension systems for a plush ride.

The 1984 Shadow and the Shadow 500. Two machines you just don't mess with.

HONDA

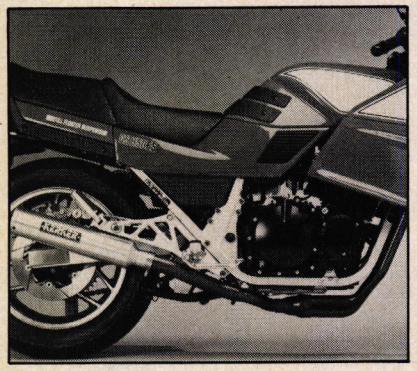
FOLLOW THE LEADER

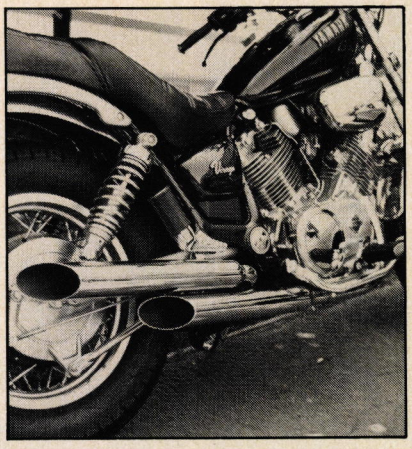
notice. California version differs slightly due to emissions equipment. © 1983 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. For a free brochure, see your Honda dealer. Or write: American Honda, Dept. 697-CG4, Box 9000, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

Motomart

Grist for your shopping list.

Double Cross: Kerker's System KX exhaust pipes feature a four-into-one-into-two design that the company claims provides a 17 percent horsepower increase for Suzuki's GS1150ES. Kerker also says the twin-tailpipe header allows use of the center- and sidestands, and doesn't interfere with oil-filter or drainplug access. The System KX exhaust retails for $325, complete with the Kerker Comp III baffle, and also is available for Yamaha's FJ1100 and FJ600. For more details, write Kerker at 7900 Deering Ave., Dept CG, Canoga Park, California 91304.

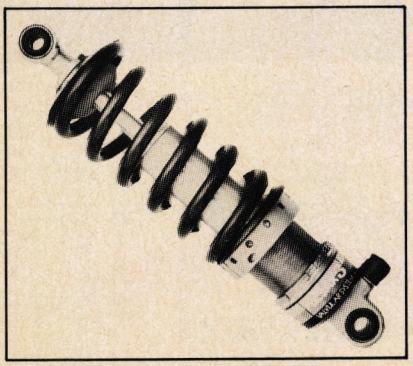


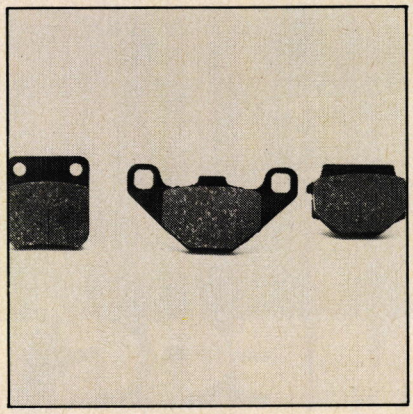


No Phony Baloney: They're not available thin-sliced, but Jardine Header's baloney-cut staggered duals are available for 700cc and 1000cc Yamaha Viragos. The stock front pipe hooks up to the Jardine muffler, and a complete new pipe is supplied for the rear cylinder. Both silencers have 0.060-inch walls and steel baffles, and the complete system retails for $132.77. For more details, contact Jardine Header Company, Dept. CG, 600 West Warner Ave., Santa Ana, California 92707.

Better Lead Than Dead: Yuasa has introduced the YuMicron CX, which it claims is the first motorcycle battery to use lead-calcium technology. Yuasa says the CX puts out 5-8 percent more cranking power than the firm's regular YuMicron battery, has three times the shelf life and requires water filling only one-eighth as often. For prices for specific models or more information, see your motorcycle dealer or write Yuasa General Battery Corporation, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 1262, Reading, Pennsylvania 19603.

Single and Italian: Marzocchi's new replacement shock absorber features a gold-anodized aluminum body, a progressively wound spring and a limited lifetime warranty. The shock uses Marzocchi's Pulsar damping system, and has an air chamber that eliminates damping-fluid aeration. Marzocchi shocks retail for $249, and are available for Yamaha's RZ350 and 550 Vision, Kawasaki's GPz550, and Honda's 750 Interceptor. To learn more, contact Cosmopolitan Motors, Dept. CG, 301 Jacksonville Road, Hatboro, Pennsylvania 19040.





Three-Way Stop: Today's hot three-wheelers have plenty of power to get you flying; now Barnett Tool and Engineering makes brake pads to help bring you back to earth. Barnett's disc brake pads are made from non-asbestos material to fit Honda 200X and 250R models, and the Kawasaki KXT Tecate. The Honda pads retail for $16.35 per set, and the Kawasaki pads go for $20.85. For additional information, contact Barnett Tool and Engineering, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 2826, Sante Fe Springs, California 90670.

Champ Clamp: The Speedy clamp is a nylon alternative to traditional worm-drive hose clamps. The maker says the clamp is reusable, can be installed with one hand, and is both cheaper and lighter than stainless-steel worm-drive clamps. The Speedy clamp comes in a range of sizes to fit inside diameters from ⅛-to-2-⅜ inches. For a free sample or more information, contact Speedy Products, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 1617, Jacksonville, Texas 75766.

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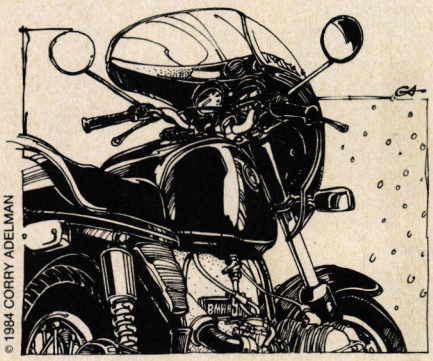
WISHBOOK

Minutes from the Last Meeting of the Council of Motorcycle Futurethink

I guess the Japanese motorcycle manufacturers have forgotten about their customers. While I like Aspencades with Boeing 747 instrument panels, and split-second RZ500s, motorcycles have gotten too expensive for most people—students like me—to afford.

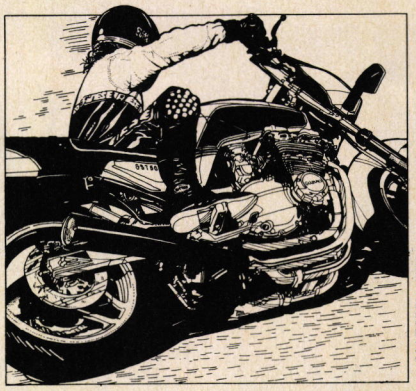

© 1984 CORRY ADELMAN

I know there are a few inexpensive new motorcycles for sale, but inexpensive usually means cheap. I read some of my dad's old cycle magazines. All the Japanese manufacturers used to be selling hot 250s and 305s.

This is the kind of stuff we need more of. Not many people want the little bikes now selling. They can call it an Exciter if they want to, but count me out for stuff like that. Today's customers want something they can afford. How the hell do the companies expect new blood to enter the marketplace? Small, exciting bikes have sold in America. They'll sell again if some excitement's put into them.

Henry Tuttlemeyer
Lake Oswego, New York

We need good middleweight sport-tourers like a new Vision 650, a sports Shadow 700, or a half-Madura 600. Make mine a powerful vee-twin, with liquid cooling, shaft drive, a five-gallon tank and a skinny profile. All week we could commute; then on weekends we could tour, carve canyons, or cruise. Give us an optional fairing, trunk and saddlebags, all quickly and cleanly removable. I don't want to choose between Interceptors, Shadows and Gold Wings. And spell "high tech" as in "low maintenance."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Frank J. Moore
Austin, Texas

Note From The Publisher

Dear Reader:

Starting with this issue, CYCLE GUIDE magazine will be published eleven times a year, instead of twelve. The November and December issues will be combined and designated the December issue. Extensive research led to our changing the frequency of publication, and we believe this move reflects both the needs of the marketplace and the seasonal nature of motorcycling.

What do you, the reader, get out of this? A better magazine, because this issue has more pages and more color photos than a standard November or December issue, and an early preview of the 1985 models.

And if you're a subscriber, don't worry. Your present subscription will be extended and you'll still get the number of issues you paid for.

All in all, we're pleased with the change, and we think you will be, too. It will allow us more time to do the stories and tests we feel are most important, and in doing so, serve you, the reader, better than ever before.

Yours,
Peter S. Nicolaysen
Publisher

THE FUTURE IS NOW:

PREVIEW '85

CYCLE GUIDE cordially invites you to a premiere showing of Moto-line 1985.

BY JOE KRESS

Draw up a chair and make yourself comfortable; CYCLE GUIDE's Moto-Show of '85 is about to begin. Three of the four Japanese manufacturers are taking part here, as is Sweden's Husqvarna. Each company has rolled its latest hardware onto our stage, and from that assembly we've culled a few of the more important new models. Admittedly, the selection process this year was simpler than in the past—gone are the mega-model introductions of the late-Seventies and early-Eighties. But while the total number of two-wheelers presented to the U.S. for 1985 might be down, the machines themselves are hardly lackluster. In fact, for satisfying proven American preferences, 1985 might be the best year ever, fewer new bikes or not.

The hard-learned financial lessons of the past few years are manifested in the *types* of bikes you see offered here for '85. Like never before, the world's manufacturers have targeted their U.S.-bound hardware at proven market segments, concentrating on the kinds of bikes that sell in America. Both Honda and Kawasaki have built their '85 new-model lineups around sportbikes and cruisers. Both companies are playing off past successes, and offering only limited numbers of tightly defined new entries. Suzuki, the third Japanese participant in our Moto-Show, has taken a different approach, one that bears close watching through the coming year. For 1985, and the new motomarket of the mid-Eighties, Suzuki has reconfigured a few of its existing models, two-year-old designs in some cases, recasting them into 1985 versions of the all-but-gone standard-model motorcycle. Sport and custom machines haven't been forgotten, though; Suzuki, too, is well represented there. Contrarily, Husqvarna's '85 offerings are the most technologically advanced models that company has ever built.

So while the number of all-new '85 bikes is down, for the discriminating U.S. buyer the selection should seem as big as ever; you just have to know where to look. It all starts by turning this page.

Lights, please. . . .

Continued

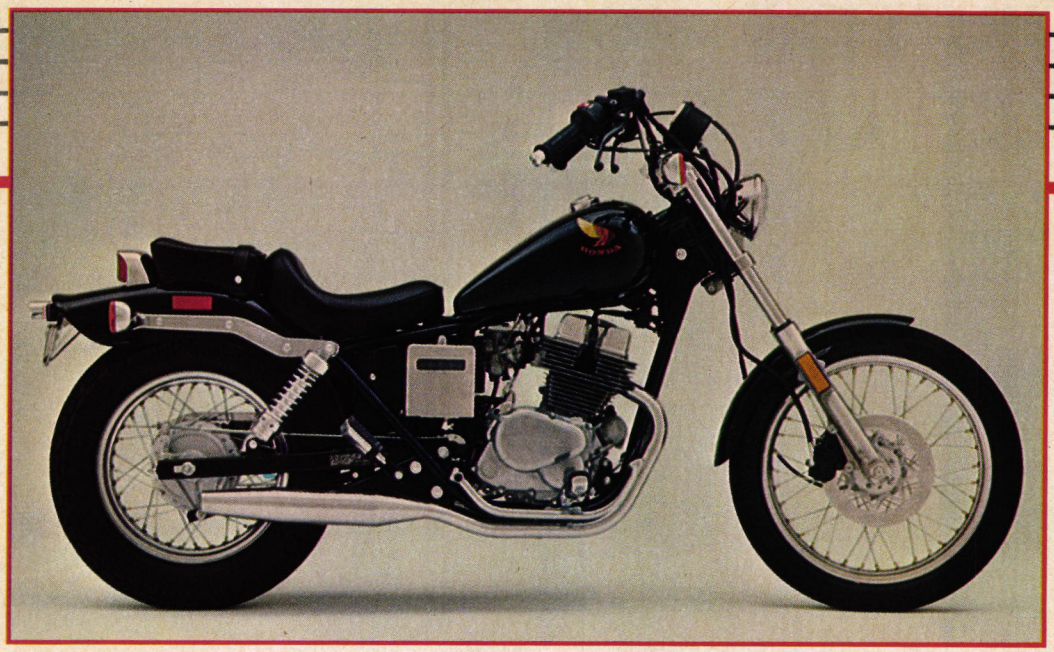
PREVIEW '85

Honda VF1000R

• In our September '84 issue, we featured this hot-blooded Honda in our Sportbikes of Europe special. Now the VF1000R has taken center stage in Honda's exhibit for Preview '85. With a claimed 117-horsepower, this racer-derived superstreeter has cleared U.S. Customs on its way to U.S. dealerships, replacing the VF1000F in the process. And with gear-driven cams, blacked-out ComStar wheels, and undeniably pure-sport looks, the VF-R hasn't lost a thing in the translation.

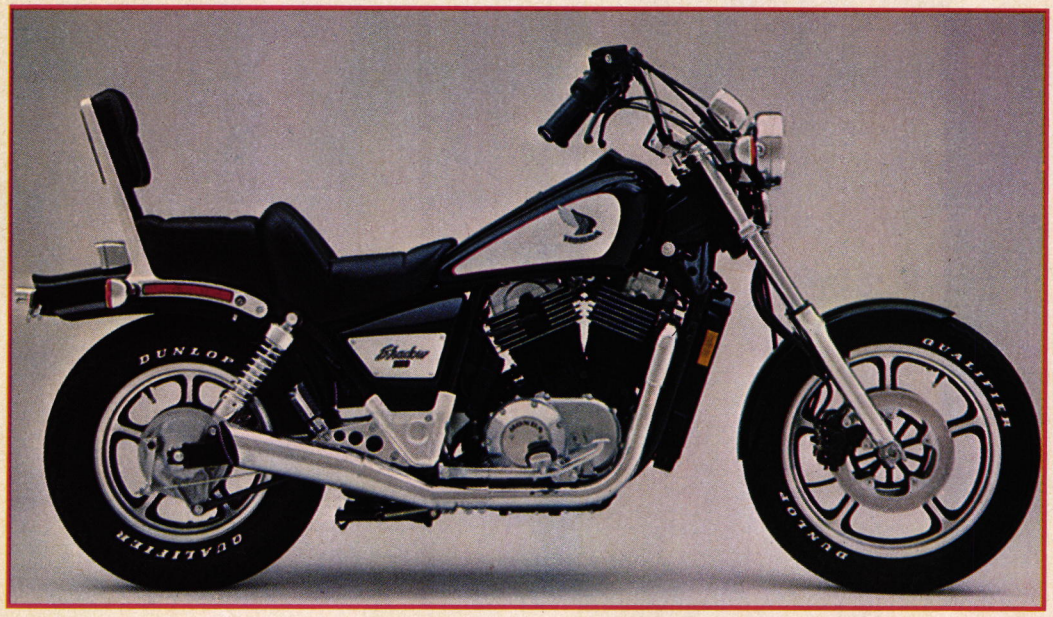
Honda Gold Wing Limited Edition

• Turn-key touring, Honda-style, has never been better. Or more opulent; because a new model, the Limited Edition Gold Wing, fairly bristles with long-haul refinements: an 1182cc fuel-injected engine, new instrumentation, an electronic trip computer and electronic cruise control. 1985 marks the 25th year of American Honda, and the 10th anniversary of the Gold Wing. The new Limited Edition 'Wing is a rolling tribute to both those occasions—and to American-style luxo-touring.



Honda Rebel

• It's no secret that motorcycle manufacturers want to attract more entry-level riders. And Honda's new 250 Rebel could be just the bait to draw them out. The Rebel's saddle is a comfortable 25 inches off the deck, its appearance, from the teardrop tank to the wire-spoke wheels, is pure American, and its 234cc twin-cylinder powerplant has its roots in Honda's own cruiser-styled CM250 Twinstar. Perhaps this new Honda should have been called the Sportstar—or maybe the Sprint.



Honda Shadow 1100

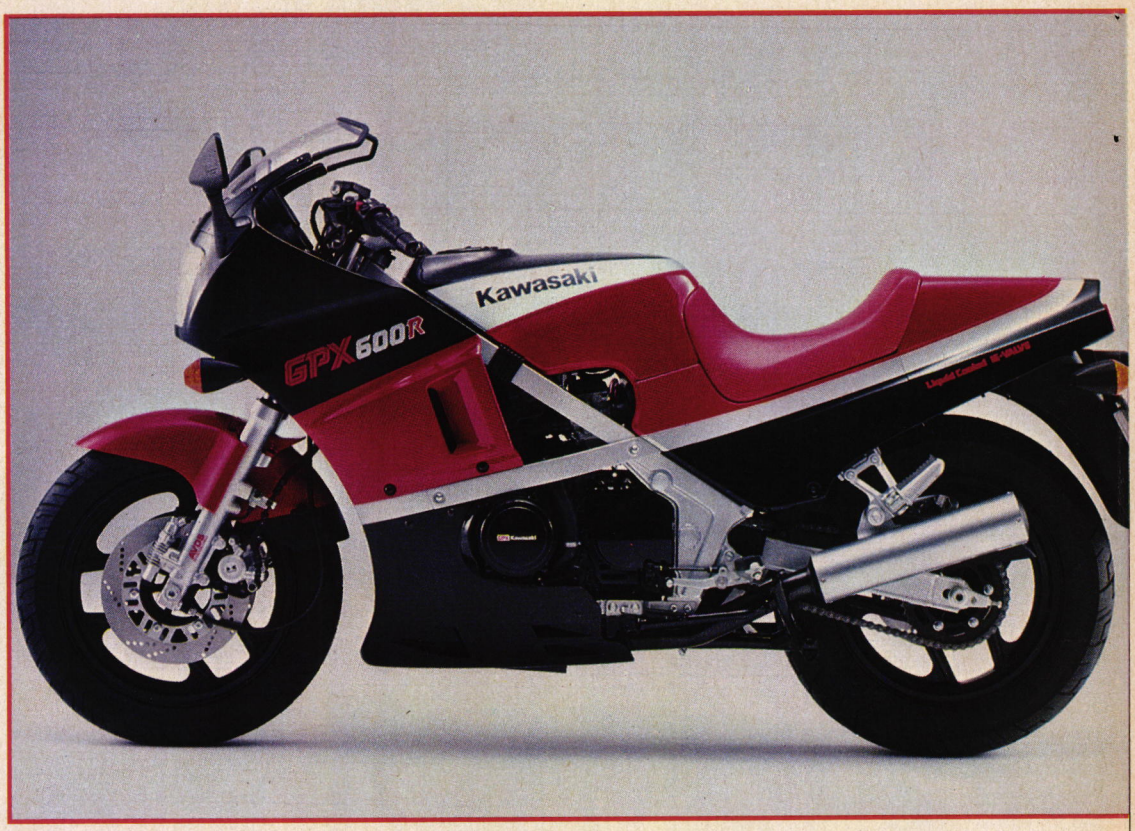
• Honda's latest cruiser casts a long Shadow—an 1100cc image of Mean Street America, to be exact. This 45-degree, liquid-cooled vee-twin displaces 1099cc, and packs a double-barrel punch big enough to put this '85 Shadow at the head of any Friday-night cruising column. The lack of a large-displacement vee-twin cruiser was a chink in Honda's armor, but not anymore; not with the Shadow 1100 around.

Honda XR600R

• Honda hasn't forgotten off-roaders for '85, not by a long shot. Topping off the firm's line of four-stroke dirtbikes is the XR600R. This 591cc dry-sump single, with Radial Four Valve Combustion chamber, not only displaces more than last year's XR500, it's lighter, too. Extensive use of aluminum and magnesium trimmed this XR's weight to a claimed 266 pounds, while a new multi-function enduro meter should help the rider trim his loop times.

Continued

PREVIEW '85



Kawasaki ZX600R

• Any U S. rider with an ounce of sporting blood pulsing through his veins knows exactly what he sees after just one look at Kawasaki's ZX600R: The odds-on paddock favorite to take every first-place trophy in sight in the Box Stock roadracing class for 1985. If what we've heard about this Baby Ninja is true, however, it's far more than that: The ZX600R, powered by an all-new liquid-cooled, 16-valve DOHC four, is claimed to out-accelerate last year's GPz750.

Kawasaki VN700 Vulcan

• In this country, vee-twins define the term "cruising": If it doesn't rumble it isn't right. Now, U.S. riders can cruise correctly on a Kawasaki, because the VN700 Vulcan has the right vee-twin stuff. This high-tech, Mean Streets cruiser features four-valve heads, liquid-cooling and shaft drive, but those things are really just icing on the cake. Because with cruisers, it's The Look that's important. And with the Vulcan, that look centers on a vee.

Kawasaki KX500

• Of course, Kawasaki didn't put all its new engines in streetbikes this year; the liquid-cooled KX500 is rolling two-stroke proof of that. At a claimed 220 pounds this 499cc Open-class warrior looks to be as up-to-date as any of the bikes that will line up against it. So, when the dust finally settles after the big-bore moto-war of '85, you might see a lime-green bike left standing alone. And it might be the one with the trophy.

Kawasaki KL250R

• One Kawasaki that's new for the U.S. this year isn't really new at all. The KL250R was a Euro-only bike for '84, and now it's being offered to riders on this side of the Atlantic. Kawasaki's betting this liquid-cooled, four-valve DOHC four-stroke single will be as big a hit here as it was in Europe for '84. KLR might very well turn out to be Kawasaki shortspeak for "Killer," since Kawasaki figures this bike will knock off its competition in the quarter-liter dual-purpose class.

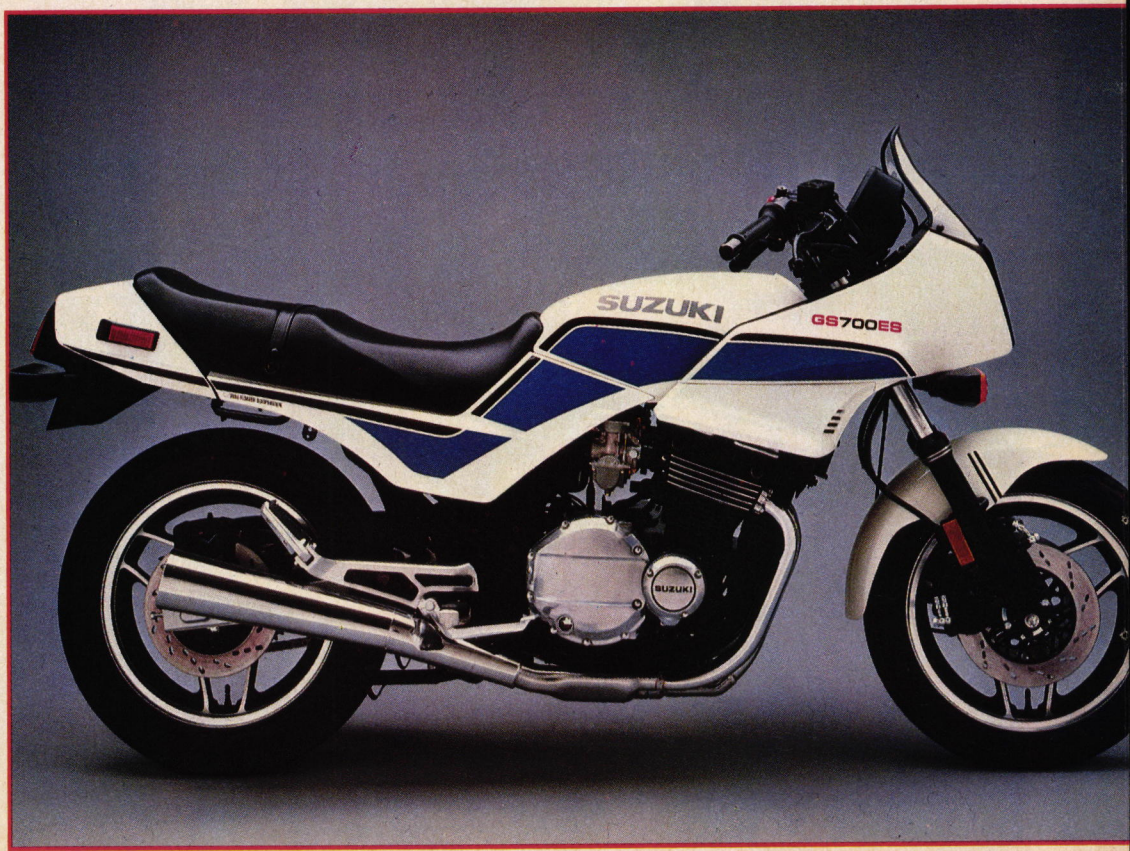
Kawasaki 454 LTD

• Small-displacement cruisers haven't gotten short shrift in Kawasaki's new-bike lineup; nor has their performance, as evidenced by the 454 LTD. This newest LTD offers a mega-bite of Kawasaki technology, so much so that its liquid-cooled, twin-cam, eight-valve vertical-twin engine could even be considered as a Half-A-Ninja. But right there is where the comparison stops; *this* Kawasaki is not only belt-driven, it's also clearly styled for The Street.

PREVIEW '85

Suzuki GS1150E

• Last year, Suzuki cut its multi-dimensional GS1100E from the line and replaced it with the GS1150ES, a sharply focused, single-purpose road warrior. For '85, however, Suzuki has stripped off the fairing and bolted on higher handlebars, to bring back the all-around, big-bore GS. But at 1135cc, it's just a little bit bigger this time around. Of course, for single-minded Suzuki sport riders, this all-purpose E-model has a stablemate for '85: the half-faired GS1150ES.

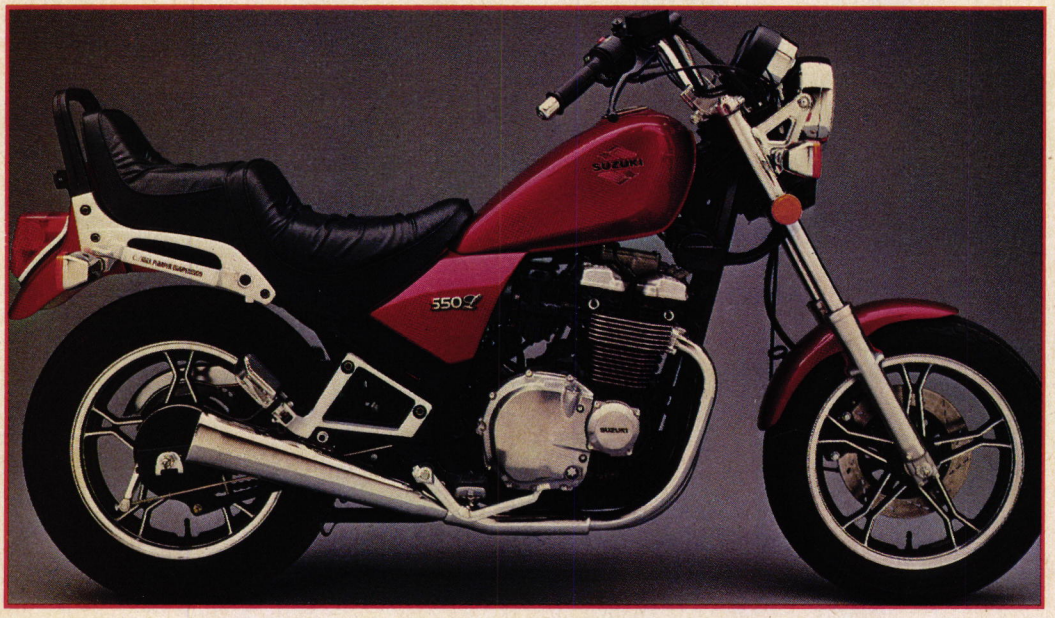


Suzuki GS700ES

• Suzuki's GS750 of two years ago has resurfaced. But this new GS marks more than simply the return of a lost sportbike; this time the bike appears as a tariff-beating 700. This 700-class air-cooled transverse-four-powered streetbike also is available as the unfaired GS700E, marking the return of another kind of bike: the all-purpose standard. Not all American riders are polarized into sporting or cruising camps; some still want unspecialized streetbikes. They'll find them at Suzuki dealerships for '85.

Suzuki SP600

• Suzuki dual-purpose bikes are back for '85. The curb-jumping SP600 is powered by an engine designed just for the occasion, too. TSCC four-valve technology found its way into this 589cc thumper, which also uses a counterbalancer to keep things smooth. The SP's familiar Full Floater rear suspension and air-assist fork should take the jolt out of fireroad chuckholes. With the SP600, Suzuki hasn't forsaken the explorer.



Suzuki GS550L

• Does the GS550L's 16-valve TSCC engine, 16-inch front wheel, hexagonal-tube frame and cruiser styling seem just a little familiar? It should, because this 1985-model Suzuki is, in fact, an '83. And the 550L is just one of the machines Suzuki brought back, with minor graphics changes, for an '85 encore. But just because a bike isn't "all new" doesn't mean that it can't be right for its time—or for its market.

Suzuki GV1200GL

• This '85-model Suzuki should come as no great surprise; the Madura 1200 was introduced in late '84. It's powered by Suzuki's first-ever liquid-cooled vee-four, and features hydraulic valve-lash adjusters and Twin Swirl Combustion Chambers. What's more, the Madura 1200's early introduction accomplished two of Suzuki's goals in one fell swoop: It put the firm into a new class, big-bore cruisers, and let Suzuki get the drop on everyone else for '85.

Continued

PREVIEW '85

Husqvarna 250WR

• Husqvarna didn't confine liquid-cooling to its motocrossers for 1985. Last year's 400WR had the feature—and still does—while this year, an equally distinctive smaller-bore Husky sports radiators on its front downtubes, too: The 1985 ISDE Replica 250WR (identical to the Euro-spec 240WR shown here, save for the decal on its sidecover). And a new, liquid-cooled center-port engine is just one reason why this quarter-liter Swede could become *the* fast track through the woods.

Husqvarna 500CR

• For 1985, it's the *subtraction* of parts that puts the spotlight on Husky's CR motocrossers. This year, Husqvarna's Immediate Track Control twin-shock rear suspension is gone, replaced by an all-new single-shock system. But while Husky took some parts off the rear of its MX bikes, it added others in front, including a disc brake. More important, contemporary single-shock MXers are all liquid-cooled, and the '85 Huskys are no exception: All the new CRs now mount radiators for liquid-cooled engines.

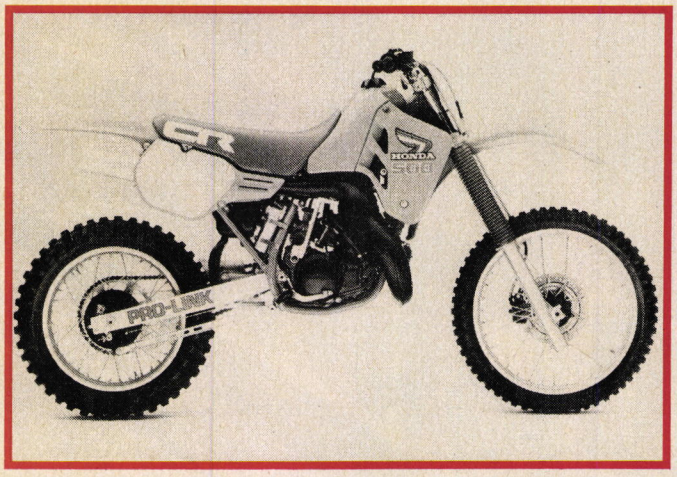
Husqvarna 510TX

• Husqvarna's four-stroke is back, in motocross, enduro and cross-country trim this time around. Efforts to solve early-model teething problems have resulted in the '85-model 510TX you see here, with a new ignition, new carburetor, a K&N air filter and redesigned cooling fins. Those changes, coupled with even more power from the 503cc single, are good reasons why this '85 Husky could be the best production four-stroke yet.

GUIDE LINES

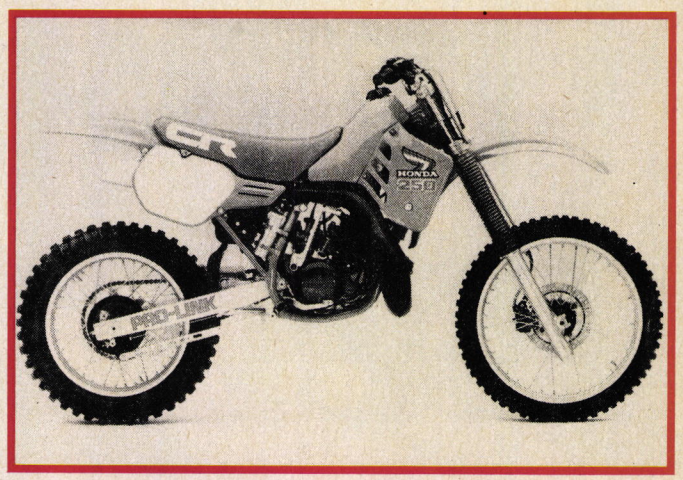
Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY JOE KRESS



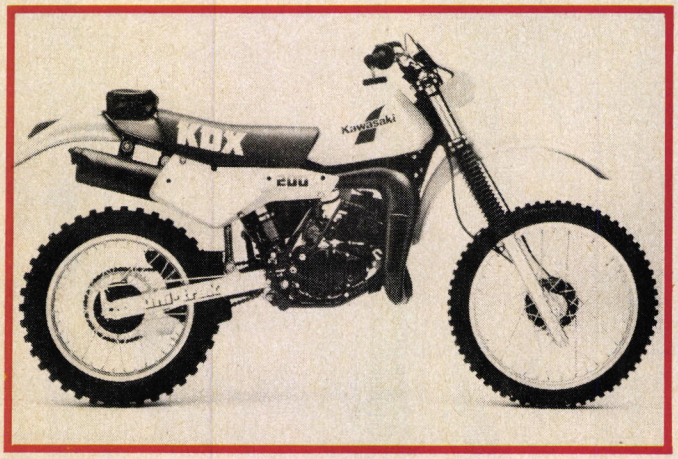
It's radiators and water jackets for the new Honda Open-classer

Liquid-cooling is just one of the changes on the '85 CR500.



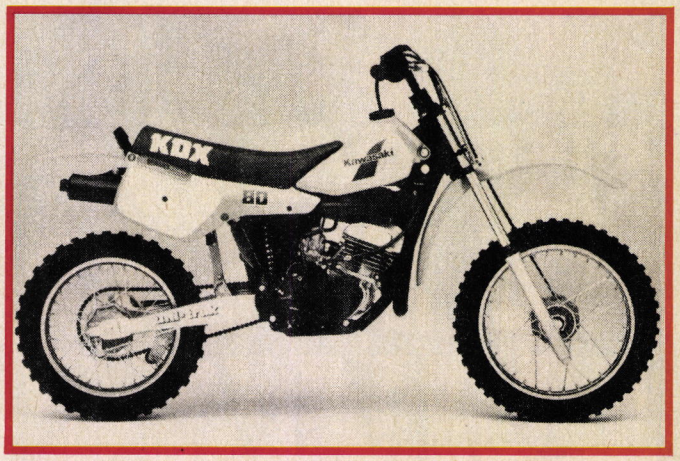
Honda found more power hidden inside its '85 quarter-liter racer

Just a few changes and the CR250 becomes a new bike.



Making improvements on the KDX200 isn't the easiest job around

But a new pipe, clutch and set of clocks sure won't hurt.



You're looking at the only other KDX in Kawasaki's '85 lineup

Because this year the 250 is gone.

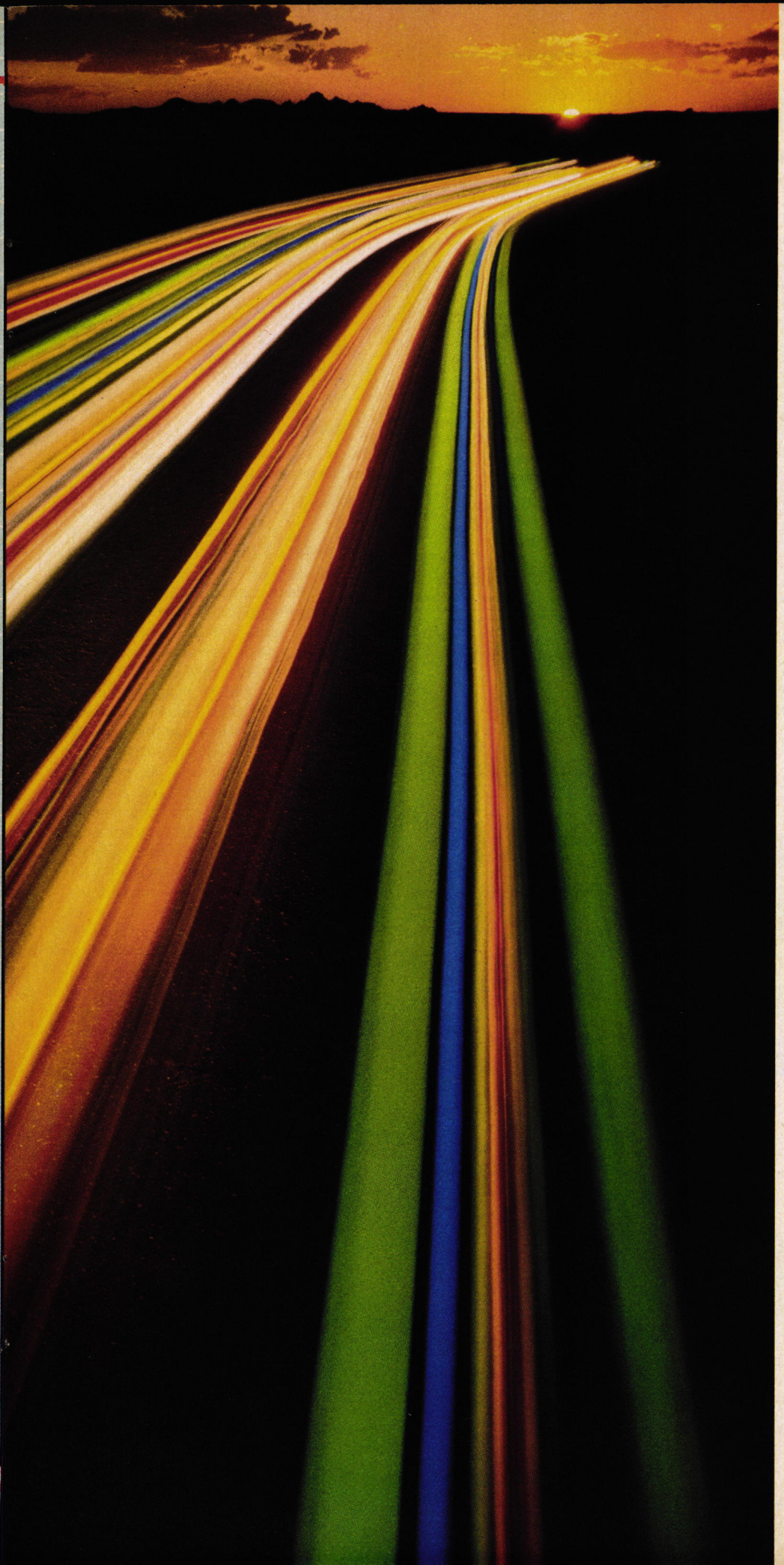
COMING SOON

• Now the changeover is complete: Honda's motocrossers are all liquid-cooled. The new CR500R, sole air-cooled holdout in the company's MX squad last year, got more than just water jackets and a radiator for its 491cc engine, too. Revised timing and redesigned ports, with a bridged exhaust, bring this new Open-class powerplant to a claimed 60 horsepower. Works-level power demands works-level handling, and Honda might have that base covered, as well. The '85-version CR500R has a relocated steering head and swingarm pivot, changes Honda hopes will give the CR500R a factory-bike feel. And to offset the added weight of a radiator and its contents the new CR has been put on a diet, too; the weight-consciousness shows up from engine cases to crankshaft, from foot levers to carburetor. There was a time—and not so long ago—when the only thing a factory racer and its production counterpart had in common was the color of their fuel tanks. No more.

• And the newest CR250R is just as serious a weapon for the quarter-liter class. Although liquid-cooling is nothing new for the CR250, its porting and timing *are* new for '85, design changes aimed at boosting and broadening the 250's powerband. And this year the 250's ATAC (Automatic Torque Amplification Chamber) system has been relocated, as well: It's been moved from last year's mounting alongside the cylinder to below the exhaust port, a position that requires a shorter linkage arrangement. The bike's weight hasn't been ignored, either: The '85 CR250R tips the scales at a claimed 212 pounds dry,

Continued

IN 1985,
KAWASAKI
IS TAKING IT
TO THE LIMIT.



Kawasaki launches a new breed of unbelievable performance in 1985. Horsepower spawned from Z-1 and LTD. And handling born of the Ninja. The '85's are blistering a path to your dealer right now. So prepare yourself to see more performance, style and excitement than ever before.

In 1985 Kawasaki lives by a new commitment—Taking It To The Limit. That means quicker, lighter, smarter superbikes. Leaner and lower LTD's. The toughest 3-Wheelers. New 4-Wheelers. Breakthrough street bikes. Touring at its most luxurious. And motocross at its winningest.

Kawasaki is about to rock the industry. We did it with the Z-1 in 1973, the LTD in 1976 and the Ninja in 1984.

Soon you'll hear about Kawasaki Taking It To The Limit in styling with the Vulcan. In boulevard performance with the Eliminator. In family fun with the KLF185 Bayou. In economy with the LTD 454. In middleweight lap times with the Ninja 600R. And in customer support with unexcelled warranty programs.

For years Kawasaki has pushed the edges of technology, performance, comfort and style where they've never been pushed before. And in 1985 we push them even further.

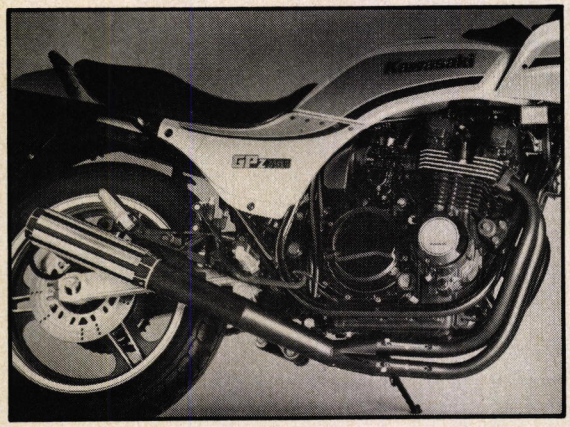
The unbelievable '85's will be at your dealer soon. Catch them while they're standing still.

Kawasaki

TAKING IT TO THE LIMIT

Kawasaki believes in riding safely. Check local laws before you ride. Member AMA and MSF.

CHAMPION MORIWAKI



After months of exhausting dyno testing, Champion Moriwaki USA is proud to bring you the most amazing new exhaust system ever made. This system, with aluminum silencer, will make your ZX-KZ-GPZ-550 or 750 into the complete performance machine that restrictive exhaust and limited ground clearance keep it from being.

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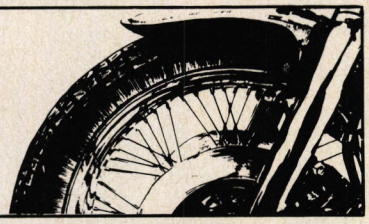

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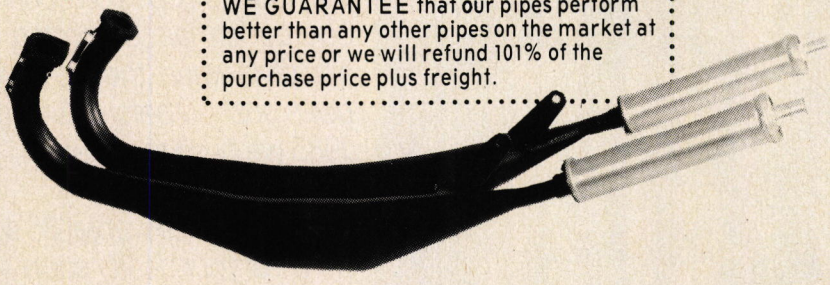

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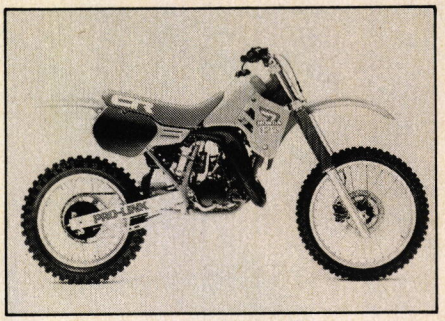
actually under FIM class limits. And when you have to add fluids to bring a race machine up to weight specs, that's a *serious* contender.

• Honda's new CR125R promises big things for the eighth-liter class, as well. This year, the bike has an all-new engine that Honda claims puts out 35 horsepower at 11,500 rpm. And



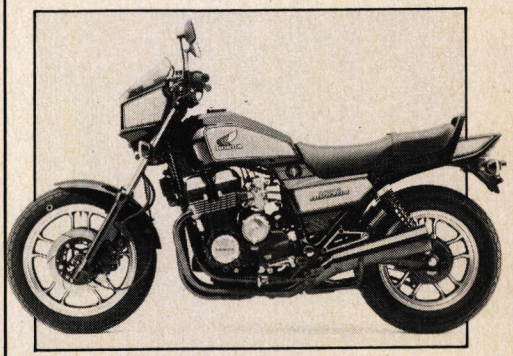
Get set for a real battle of the 125s

CR125 has an all-new engine for '85.

like both of its larger-displacement CR stablemates, the new 125 has a relocated steering head and swingarm pivot, plus more travel and increased oil capacity for the Pro-Link rear suspension. Honda's 125 MXer might have had its hands full in the wars of '84, but 1985 is a new year. And this is a new CR125R.

• Kawasaki unveiled some of its '85 hardware, too: a pair of KDXs that make up the company's entire 1985 enduro-bike lineup. The biggest change here is that there are only two bikes; the KDX250 isn't offered as a 1985 model. And don't look for sweeping changes on the two machines that are available this year—you won't find any. Instead, the company has made detail updates on bikes that it already considers the class of the field. The '85 KDX200 has a new pipe this year, a new carburetor and a revamped clutch. The only mechanical change to the '85 KDX80 is a quieter exhaust, a revision intended to make the machine a better campfire cruiser. Of course, if a rider absolutely, positively has to have a KDX250, that still can be arranged—all he need do is make a trip to his nearest dealer, there are plenty of leftover 250s around.

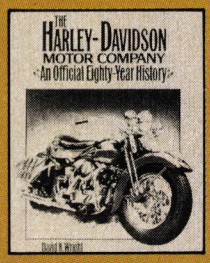
• One bike you won't see around, though, is the new CBX750 Honda Horizon. This release is for the Japanese market. The interesting thing here is that the Horizon shows that Honda isn't above taking a walk through the



A new 750 on the Honda Horizon

Now this is the hot-rod Nighthawk S.

Book Review



The Harley-Davidson Motor Company
An Official Eighty-Year History
by David K. Wright
288 pages, $24.95
Motorbooks International
Osceola, Wisconsin 54020

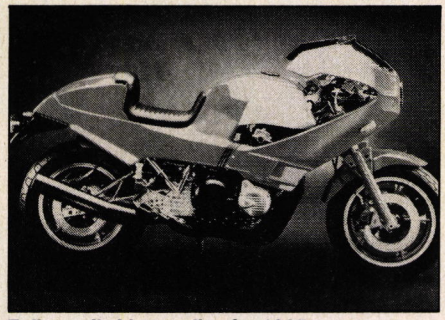
• When a company becomes the sole surviving motorcycle manufacturer in America, it's bound to be written about. When that manufacturer represents the last of what had once been a heavily populated industry, the story becomes interesting. For that reason, numerous books have been written about Harley-Davidson. This isn't one of the best; students of American motorcycling history will find this book lacking. That's not to say it's a bad book; it's not. Some of its sections present Harley lore as never seen before. But it's not a history, at least not in an objective sense.

This is the story of Harley-Davidson according to Harley-Davidson. When the company opened its files to the author, and made its past and present officers available for interview, it also got review rights to the manuscript. The resulting book is an official company history—it even has a Harley-Davidson part number. But the one-sided treatment isn't necessarily offensive; the history presented isn't wrong. It's just not complete. Any company that's been in business since 1903 has made mistakes. You won't read about any of Harley-Davidson's mistakes here, though. This is H-D putting its best public-relations foot forward; the less-pleasant memories are glossed over or put in the most favorable light.

That's criticism from a history student's point of view. From a general-interest perspective, however, "An Official Eighty-Year History" looks much better. Hundreds of previously unavailable documents and file photos illustrate this overview of the company and its following, starting with Arthur Davidson and continuing right through to Arlen Ness. There are chapters on the founders, the present owners, the manufacturing plants, the bikes themselves, even celebrities who have owned Harleys. It's all lively, upbeat information and, to a casual reader, highly interesting. But it's not an unbiased history; it's Harley-Davidson blowing its own horn. But maybe America's sole surviving motorcycle manufacturer has earned that right.

— Joe Kress

existing-parts bin, picking something from here and something from there, and bolting together something new. The Horizon formula calls for a 750cc Euro-spec engine combined with shaft drive and Nighthawk S bodywork from the U.S. The result is a high-performance sport custom for the home front.



Egli unveils his new line for 1985

With more than just a hint of Katana.

• On the other side of the world, Fritz Egli of Switzerland recently announced a new line of bodywork to cover his frame kits for Honda, Kawasaki and Suzuki inline-four powerplants. And Egli-watchers won't be the least bit surprised by the look of the new pieces, either. Hans Muth, of Suzuki Katana fame, has been working with Egli specials quite a bit of late, and the new Egli body panels bear his unmistakable stamp.

• And finally, now that Harley-Davidson is in the three-wheel streetcar market (Guide Lines, October '84), get ready for more motorcycle-manufacturer involvement in this field—and look for it to come from Yamaha. That company already supplies 1200cc Venture vee-fours to power a three-wheeler called the Badsey Bullet, an Anaheim, California-built open tourer for two. Although Yamaha doesn't manufacture the unit, the firm has authorized its 1600 dealers to service the three-wheeled Bullet, and has approved the vehicle's engineering.

FEDERAL CASES

• California Yamaha dealers wanting to take on the company's Riva motor-scooter line now have the law behind them. The California DMV recently ruled motor-scooters are not a separate "line-make" from motorcycles, as Yamaha had contended. The decision entitles franchised Yamaha motorcycle dealers to add the new scooter line if they so desire. Prior to this ruling, Yamaha Motor Company prohibited its motorcycle dealers from selling the Riva motor-scooter and was, instead, setting up separate Riva dealerships.

• Can this be the EPA talking? In the August 2 issue of the Federal Register, the agency outlined its plan to require gasoline refiners to reduce the lead content of their product by 91 percent. The proposal would be in full effect by January, 1988. More recently, however, the EPA acknowledged, "Other engines, such as motorcycles, boats and gasoline-powered equipment might need a valve lubricant such

Continued

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as lead." The federal agency concedes it knows less about the needs of these types of gasoline engines than it does for those of automobiles and trucks.

• ATVs have become big business, something a few state legislatures across the country have noticed. So far, four states, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont, are considering enactment of registration-requirement bills for the rapidly growing number of three- and four-wheelers hitting the trails.

• California is the only state in the country that has never had a mandatory helmet-use law, and now it looks as if that distinction might be coming to an end. AB2497, which already passed through the Assembly and is now in the Senate Transportation Committee, would require streetbike passengers less than 15½ years old, and moped riders in the same age group, to wear protective headgear.

• Tennessee finally has lost its crashbar requirement for streetbikes. HB769 had little trouble passing the Assembly, and was signed into law. Opponents of the repeal measure were hard-pressed to provide any proof showing crashbars in any way improved motorcycle safety.

HARD CASH

• Yamaha's end-of-the-year accounting showed a net loss totaling $152 million. The company announced, however, that its inventory of non-current models has been greatly reduced, resulting in an increased demand for production. This, the company hopes, will help put it back into the black next year. But Yamaha's motorcycle production will be scaled down considerably from what it had been; last year's total was 2.9 million units; for 1985, the figure will be 1.5 million. Yamaha, once committed to maximum growth, now is picking its markets more selectively, concentrating on areas that currently show a profit. Right now those areas include three-wheelers, outboard motors and automobile engines for Toyota and Ford.

• Consistent with that news is Yamaha's announcement that European dealers will have to wait until 1985 for additional shipments of RZ500s. Yamaha's scaled-down motorcycle production wasn't prepared for the immediate sales success of the two-stroke sportbike. Supplies became so limited that English dealers were required to keep the bikes on display for at least one month before delivering them to customers.

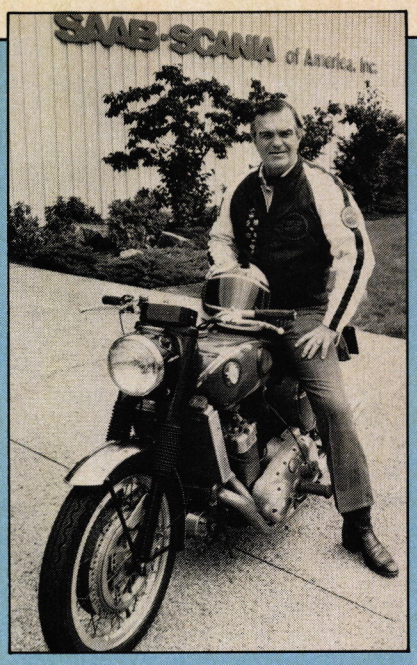
• The overall picture at Suzuki Motor Company is a bit brighter. Because of increased sales and reduced expenses, the company posted a $24 million profit for the last fiscal year. General Motors Corp. owns 5 percent of SMC, and the Suzuki-made Sprint automobile is sold in the U.S. under the Chevrolet banner.

• Harley-Davidson officials are optimistic; they've just seen their company's market share in the over-700cc field jump more than four points in one year, while their Japanese competition has faltered. Last year, Honda

RIDE/REPORT:

Saab Triple

What do you expect the president of Saab rides? A Saab, of course.

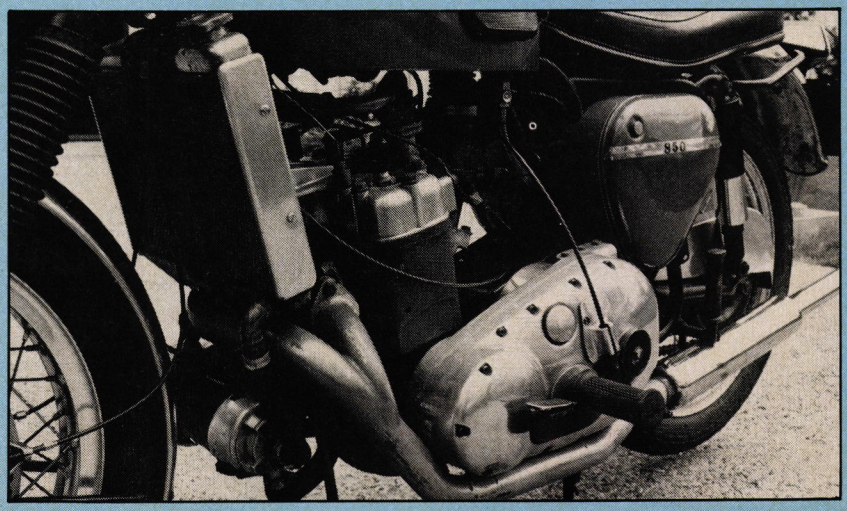


• Robert J. Sinclair is a car guy. As president of Saab-Scania of America, Sinclair's workday is spent trying to solve the problems of the four-wheel world. But in his off-time, Sinclair relaxes on two wheels; this top auto-company excecutive is an avid motorcyclist. His stable of 17 bikes includes contemporary models, as well as such classics as a 1926 Norton 16H, a '36 Nimbus 750 Four with sidecar, and a '74 Norton 850 Commando. During the summer, Sinclair regularly commutes to Saab's Connecticut headquarters on one of his bikes, and encourages fellow employees to follow suit. He's even established a "Motorcycle Only" parking area in the company lot, making it easier to go to work on two wheels instead of four.

And maybe that's where the problem started. Sinclair the auto-company president was getting embarrassed about Sinclair the motorcycle enthusiast parking a Norton or a BMW in the Number One spot at Saab-Scania. But since Saab doesn't make motorcycles, Sinclair had little choice—ride another brand or ride nothing at all. The president's dilemma was resolved, though, when Sinclair heard of a one-off bike for sale on the Isle of Man: a Saab-powered BSA Rocket III. The purchase was made sight unseen; Sinclair reasoned that if it was Saab-powered it was bound to be okay.

Sinclair's latest commuter was originally built in 1975. Ray Pye, the bike's constructor, was looking for an alternative to the best the British had to offer. He started with a BSA Rocket III, then removed the air-cooled three-cylinder engine and replaced it with a liquid-cooled two-stroke triple from an old Saab 96 four-wheeler. The 841cc powerplant was grafted to a pre-unit Triumph gearbox with parts taken from a 1000cc Vincent. Some of the hardware that Vincent gave up to this one-off included its engine sprocket, primary chain and clutch sprocket. To cool the bike's new engine, Pye built up a special radiator from a core that originally saw service in a Morris Minor. The water pump is original Saab, as is the engine's electrical system. When complete, Pye's strange brew not only worked, it outperformed the capabilities of the BSA's stock brakes. The last change was the installation of an eight-leading-shoe drum brake, the hot ticket on racetracks at the time.

And 10 years later this composite bike is still the hot ticket, as far as Robert J. Sinclair is concerned. The Saab president finally has a Saab motorcycle to ride to work. Well, almost. Just call it a SAABSA—Sinclair does. —*Joe Kress*



held a 53.8 percent market share of heavyweight-motorcycle sales; for 1984, it was down to 42.3 percent.

• Supercross stadium racing has lost a major sponsor. Wrangler Sportswear, a division of Bluebell Inc., announced its withdrawal from the series, effective October 1, 1984. Wrangler first became involved with Supercross in 1982, and posted a $75,000 point fund. That fund had risen to $125,000 by the '84 season, and was coupled with considerable Wrangler-paid promotions for the races. Executives at Bluebell Inc. blame the pull-out decision on internal budget considerations at Wrangler.

• Continental Products Corporation announced continued production and sales of its ContiTwin tire set, despite introduction of its new, higher-performance SuperTwins. According to company spokesmen, the ContiTwin tire set still sells well. The tires will stay in the company's catalog at least for 1985, possibly longer.

• Anyone buying a Bimota in this country will find that a SuperTrapp exhaust system is original equipment. SuperTrapp, a Davis, California-based aftermarket company and a division of the Moller Corporation, just concluded an agreement with Bimota U.S.A. to supply the importer with exhaust systems for all Bimotas for the U.S. market.

RUMORS

• Yamaha is conspicuous by its absence from our Preview '85, but well-placed sources tell us they know the reason: Yamaha is busy still putting the finishing touches on its hot-ticket streetbikes for the new year. And if our men with eyes at the keyhole speak the truth, hot-ticket could be an apt description for at least one of those still-in-the-shop '85 Yamahas. This new machine, we're told, will put out more horsepower than any other two-wheeler on the road, and most that are on the track—in any class. And don't be surprised to see this hot-rod Yamaha come with a teardrop tank, high bars and a fat rear tire, either.

• Take heart, vee-twin sport fans, help could be on the way. Word is out that Kawasaki is testing another version of its new liquid-cooled vee-twin and, you guessed it, this time it's a sportbike. Look for a mid-year introduction, at the earliest, on this one.

• In another bit of Kawasaki gossip, we're told the company still has one more big gun to fire into the sportbike war of '85. Our sources predict a mid-year arrival for this bike, too, and tell us it's a "traditional-Kawasaki" street screamer. But this one, they say, will have more horsepower and a greater engine displacement than any other four-cylinder-powered Kawasaki ever built.

• We shouldn't have to wait long for a liquid-cooled Yamaha sportbike, though. The new FJ750, we're told, will have the drapes lifted off it at the Cologne Show for a first appearance, radiator and all. Right after that, our spy network says, the bike is headed for the

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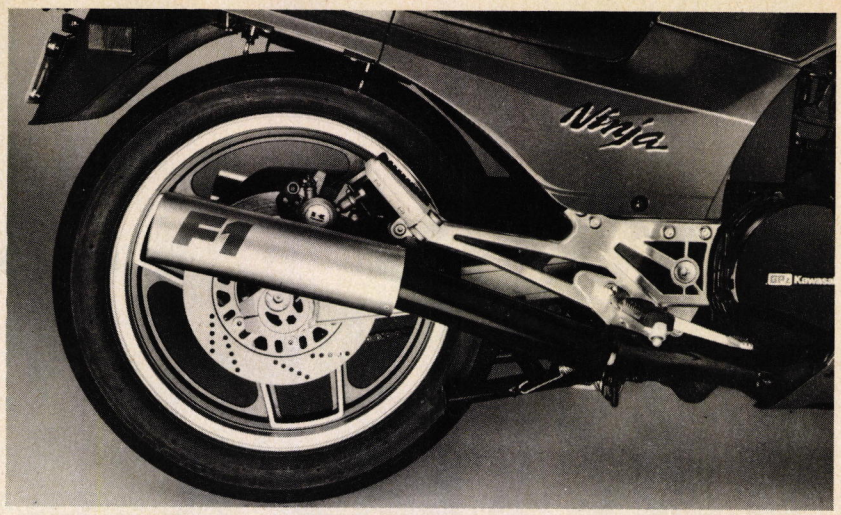

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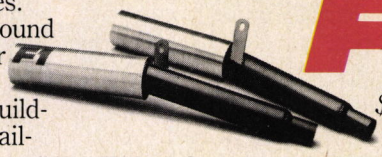

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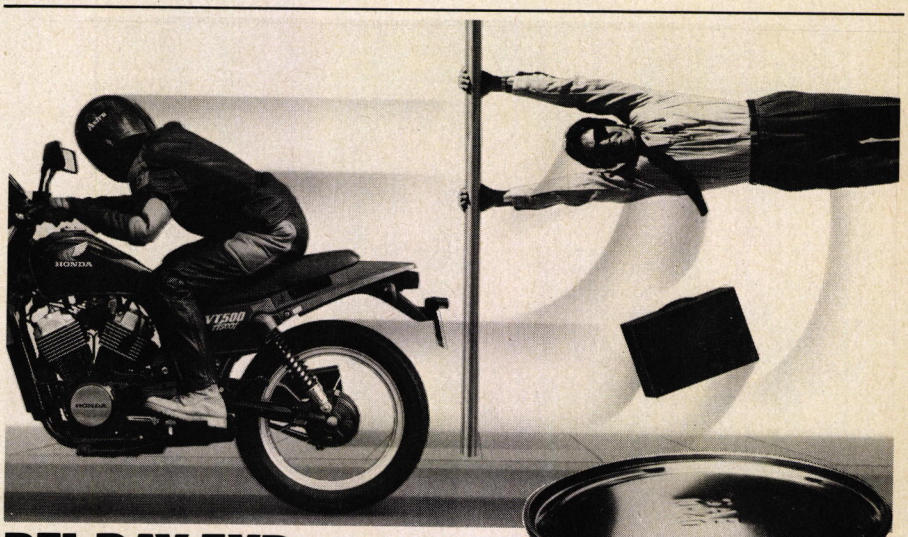

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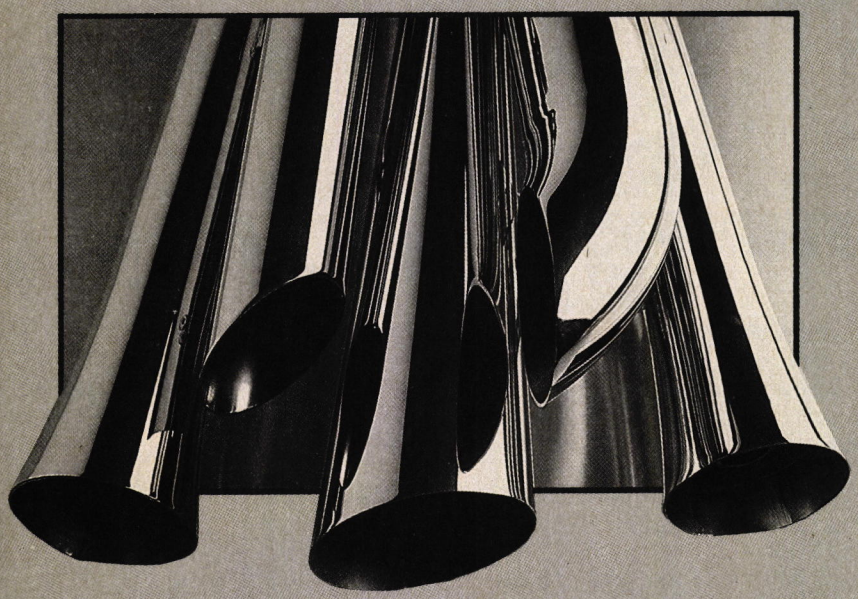

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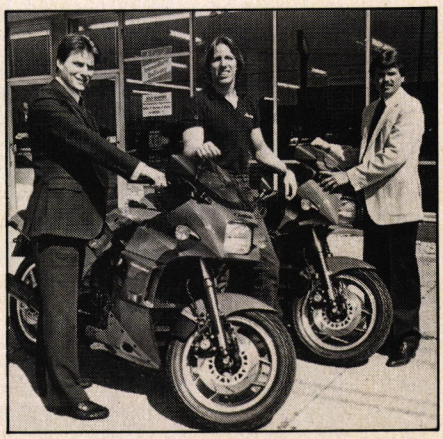
• Talk around the Suzuki camp centers on another all-new sportbike due out later this year. We're told this bike already has been targeted as the company contender in Superbike racing, which means it's probably a 750. We're also told Suzuki wants clarification of the racing rules as they pertain to the cooling medium used. Does an *oil-cooled* bike qualify as liquid-cooled? Suzuki wants to know.

APART FROM THE CROWD

• Some days, it just doesn't pay to get out of bed. That little bit of cartoon hindsight applies across the board, too; whether you're rich and famous or just an average guy, some days a bad-luck cloud hangs overhead and won't go away. Take the case of Malcolm Forbes, well-known publisher and high-rolling friend of motorcycling. Forbes' bad-luck streak didn't just last a day, either; his went on for almost a month. First, the New York-based businessman crashed his motorcycle while touring Montana, breaking three ribs in an accident that put him in the hospital for several days. Discharged from the hospital and back on the East Coast, Forbes tried to relax a little with another hobby, hot-air ballooning. That didn't work out any better than did the Montana motorcycle ride. Taped ribs and all, Forbes was 2500 feet over New Jersey when his balloon began deflating. The result was an unscheduled and very rough landing in a housing tract still under development. Fortunately, no one was hurt during the fall, but Forbes was overheard muttering, "There goes my ninth life," as he climbed out of the gondola and headed back to bed.

• Of course, there's another side to this kind of story, and Philip Webb of Cleveland knows all about it. Webb had entered Kawasaki's "Discover The Ninja" contest and was picked as the grand-prize winner. So while Malcolm was busy breaking bones and flattening housing projects, Webb was taking delivery of two brand-new Ninjas and getting ready for an all-expense-paid tour of Europe.

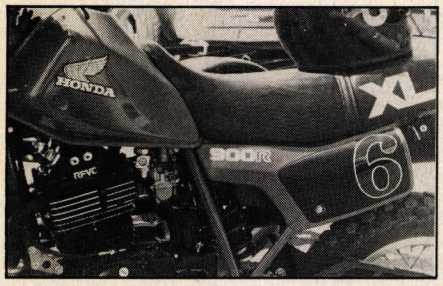


Congratulations, you're the lucky winner

Now try riding two bikes at once.

• Last September, the AMA was host to a National Championship Poker Run in Montpelier, Ohio, part of the '84 "Ride for Rights" fundraiser to help bankroll the association's government-relations work. This event was a little different, though, because five AMA staff members participated, entering with their own machines. And if a man's choice of his motorcycle is a window to his soul, these guys all deserve a second look. Ed Youngblood, AMA president, rides a '68 BMW R60 fitted with a sidecar and a '72 750cc engine. Rob Rasor, vice president of government relations, goes the class route with an '83 R100RS. Gary Winn, the legislative-affairs manager, straddles a 1970 500cc Velocette Thruxton, while Ken Reid, director of touring and transportation, tours and is transported aboard a '69 BSA Thunderbolt 650. The executive editor of the association's magazine, Greg Harrison, reserves a special spot for his '69 Norton 750 Commando. Draw your own conclusions.

• But we'll bet that any one of those guys would love to be at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas later this fall; the late Steve McQueen's collection of more than 100 motorcycles will go on sale. The collection, valued at more than $1 million, includes everything from old Triumphs and BSAs to McQueen's competition bikes, to the fence-jumping two-wheeler the actor rode in "The Great Escape."



It's Big Thump in the California desert

Or maybe a 900cc Honda mirage?

• Here's something every bit as unusual as that cinematic two-wheeler. This highly experimental Big Thump is—as its tank badges proudly proclaim, an XL900R. And you thought huge-displacement singles were just a moto-fantasy. But then, you don't really believe everything you see, do you?

• File this one under Truth Stranger Than Fiction: Don't expect TAFA Inc. to supply much of the raw material used to build motorcycles. At least, hope it doesn't. Scientists at Thermal Spray Equipment and Supplies of Concord, New Hampshire, a division of TAFA, accidently discovered an aluminum alloy that disintegrates in water. True. Although the scientists still don't understand exactly why the metal turns into a fine, white powder when it contacts water, they're interested enough to pursue its industrial applications. And that's fine with us, so long as those applications don't show up as motorcycle engine cases or bike frames. Imagine the new dimension that would give to a Saturday-morning wash and wax on a $5000 sport machine. •

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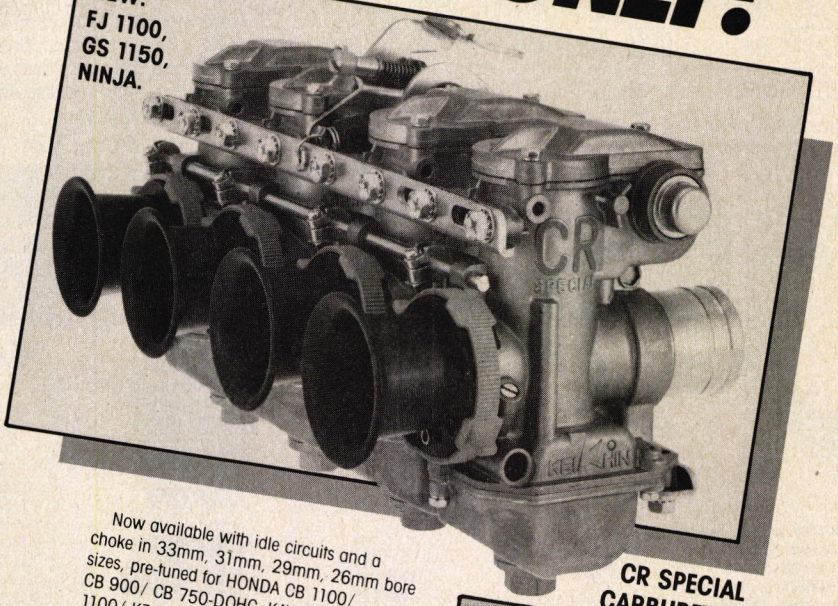

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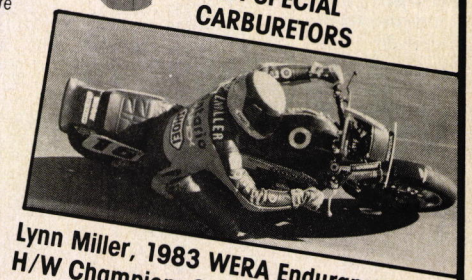

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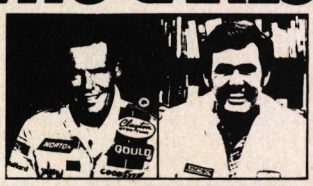

Bobby and Al Unser, race car drivers and motorcyclists. *"On the race track, we're both in total control. We approach off-road riding the same way. Reckless riding is stupid. And not very impressive to the hikers and campers we meet."*

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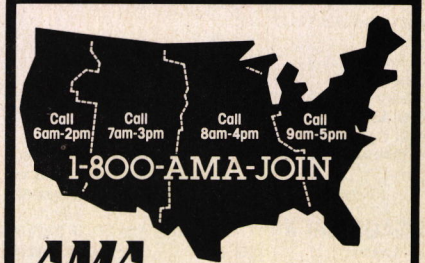

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ROAD TEST:

Follow the leader.

BY CHARLES EVERITT

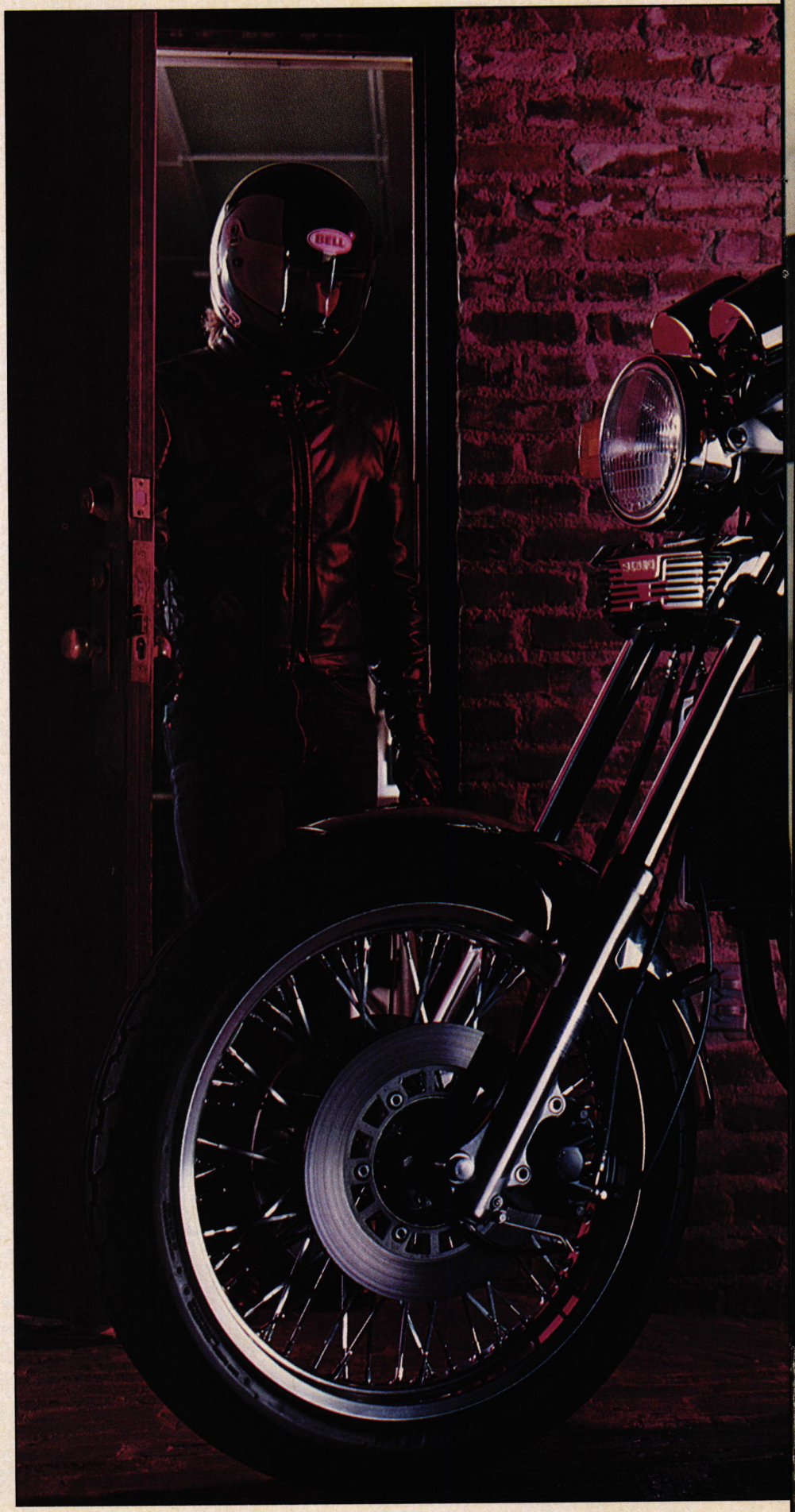
It's no secret; the past two model years have seen nothing less than a full-blown sportbike renaissance. Performance is back in style, and sporting enthusiasts have never had it so good.

But what about those riders whose passions aren't kindled by hot-blooded sporters, riders who find cruiser-styled motorcycles far more appealing? Well, they've had to weather a couple of lean years, because for the most part, recent cruisers have been warmed-over versions of existing machinery. And with so little action in the cruiser class, some people even were predicting its demise.

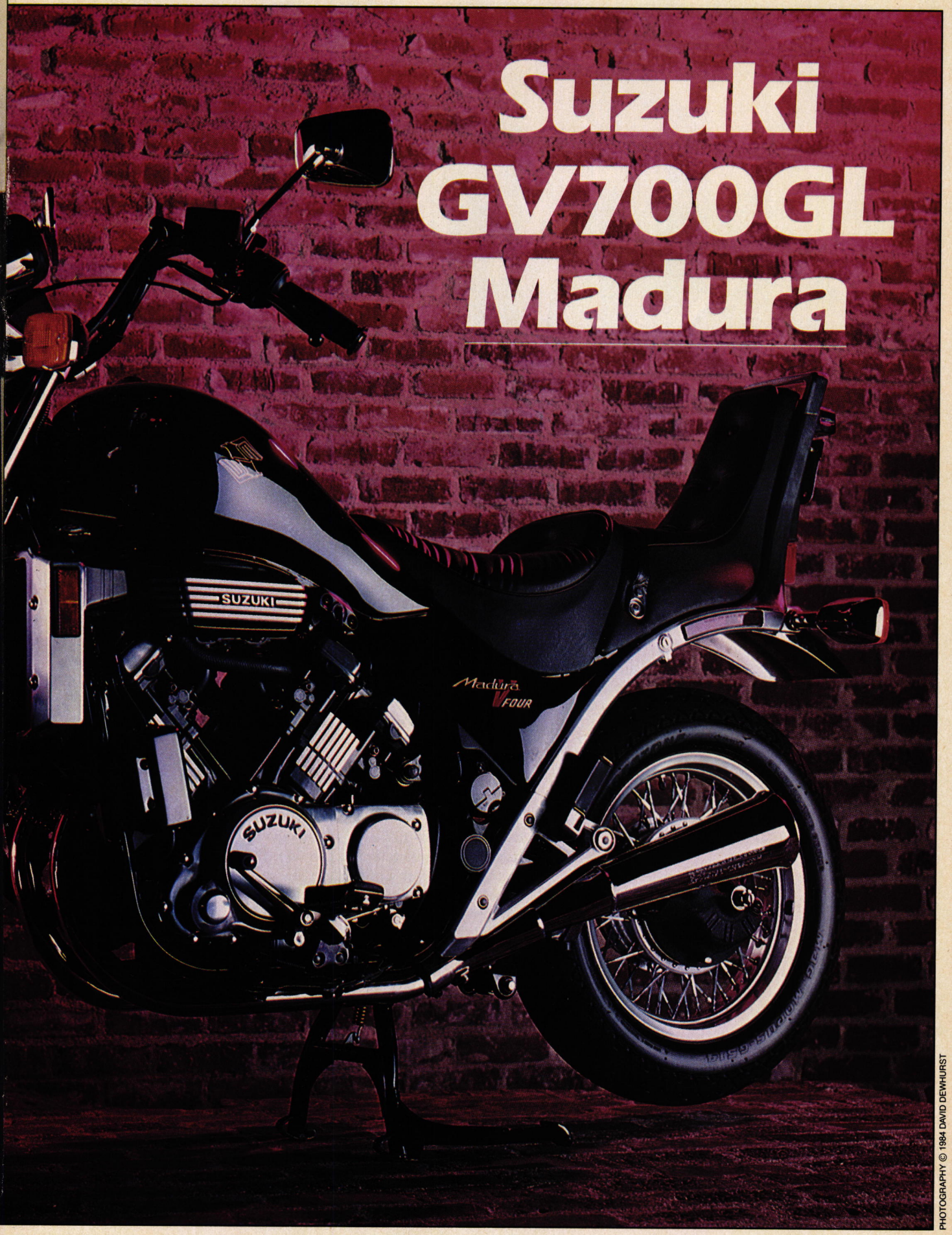
What those doom-criers seem to forget, though, is that cruisers still frequently outsell their sporting counterparts by a huge margin. And that fact of moto-life wasn't lost on Suzuki when it decided to introduce a pair of 82-degree liquid-cooled vee-four engines, a 1200 and an ITC-tariff-beating 700. So, Suzuki wasted no time in bolting those new motors into cruiser-bike chassis, one of them the GV700GL Madura you see here, because cruisers *sell.*

But the Madura isn't just a run-of-the-mill custom bike, not by a long shot. This motorcycle goes out of its way to incorporate a full complement of cruiser styling licks, including a 1-inch-diameter handlebar (à la Harley-Davidson), a teardrop tank and a sissybar, to name just a few. Suzuki even endowed the Madura with hexagonal-section frame tubes (first used on the 1983 550 Impulse), and flat-spoke wire wheels, with no claims of strength advantages, only those of appearance. That dedication to appearance was so complete, in fact, that Suzuki spokesmen say every time a conflict involving styling and function cropped up in designing the Madura, style got the nod. And many of the bike's styling cues—and its basic design—appear to have been taken from Honda's Magnas. Suzuki claims the Madura isn't a direct response to the Magna, but the similarities are both obvious and plentiful.

One area in which the Madura perfectly mimics the Magna is in powerband width. The Suzuki has the same incredibly wide, eminently usable powerband that's become a trademark of vee-fours. The 698.5cc Madura motor's power is available from idle speeds to its 10,750-



Suzuki GV700GL Madura



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

rpm redline, and it pulls willingly in fifth gear all the way down to 2000 rpm without a complaint; just roll open the throttle and the Madura moves out quickly. That style of power admirably suits the bike's assigned mission of cruising the boulevards. Its low end, coupled with its ability to rev on top, seems to split the difference nicely between a vee-twin's tuned-for-torque personality and a highly tuned inline-four's cammy, top-weighted powerband.

Smoothness is another characteristic of current vee-four designs, and the Madura doesn't disappoint there, either. True, Suzuki's 82-degree vee-four doesn't have the perfect primary balance ascribed to 90-degree vees (such as Honda's), but what shaking does emanate from the motor gets dealt with by its rubber mounts. As a result, the bike feels almost eerily smooth, with only a trace of vibration through the footpegs from about 7000 rpm to 9000 rpm.

Such a low level of vibration probably will go unnoticed by most riders; what won't go unnoticed, though, are the Madura's carburetion quirks. The motor is oversensitive to small throttle openings, and it takes a practiced hand to make the bike respond smoothly at low speeds. Any sloppiness on the rider's part gets amplified by driveline lash and the shaft-drive's torque reaction, making for a jerky, snatchy ride. In addition, the engine surges and stutters slightly at fixed throttle settings at freeway speeds, and a major-league hesitation at high rpm further undermines the Madura's ridability. What's worse, all of these traits become more pronounced when the engine is hot.

And, not to put too fine a point on it, Suzuki's GV700GL is slow; its 13.307/102.15 quarter-mile time and speed put it almost in 400cc territory. To be sure, mind-wrenching speed isn't necessarily part of a boulevardier's marching orders. Certainly, though, the bike's weight works against it; at 546 pounds, the Suzuki is heavier than some literbikes, and 37 pounds heavier than a 1984 VF700C Magna.

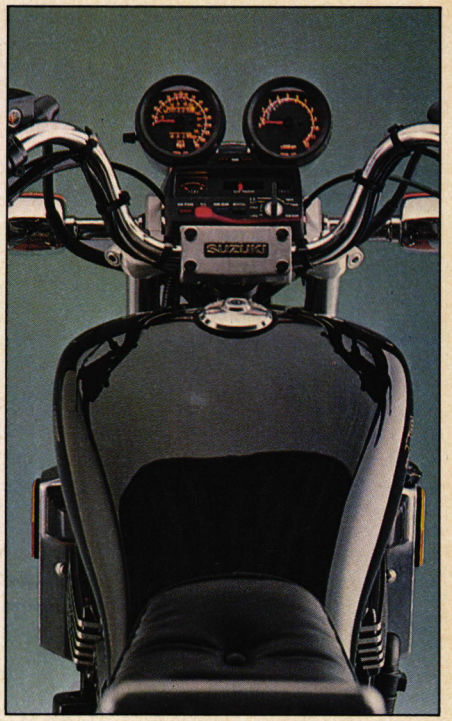
Yet, what the Madura's engine lacks in sheer speed, it attempts to make up for in convenience features. Indeed, investigation into the motor reveals another theme Suzuki pursued in building this motorcycle: low maintenance. First, there are conventional items, such as automatic cam chain tensioners, non-adjustable electronic ignition with electronically controlled advance and dwell, and a spin-on oil filter. But the Madura also has hydraulic valve-lash adjusters and a hydraulic clutch, firsts for Suzuki streetbikes, though not for the industry. In fact, Suzuki's valve-adjustment system is almost identical to that used in Honda's 650 and 700 Nighthawks—the hydraulic adjuster maintains a fixed clearance between the cams, followers and valve stems. Regardless of where the idea originated, though, the system worked flawlessly during our test; our Madura's valve train remained quiet and smooth-running, even during sustained high-rpm operation.

While the Madura's valve train resembles those of recent Nighthawks, Suzuki's vee-four seems most closely akin to Honda's 700 Magna powerplant. Suzuki took its vee-four design a step further than Honda's, though, with the inclusion of its valve-lash-adjustment system. But otherwise, they're remarkably similar: They're both liquid-cooled, shaft-drive vee-fours with cylinders cast integrally with the top case halves, 360-degree plain-bearing crankshafts, six-speed transmissions, double overhead cams and four valves per cylinder. Plus, both motors use the same size valves, positioned at the same 38-degree included angle.

Dig a little deeper in the Madura engine's internals, though, and you'll discover some clear differences from Honda practice. Suzuki's design, for example, employs different cam timing for its front and rear cylinder banks, and greater valve lift for the rear cylinders, too, in order to compensate for the rear's shorter exhaust tract length. Moreover, the Madura drives its cams via three Hy-Vo-type chains, whereas the Magna uses two. In the Suzuki, a jackshaft located at the base of the cylinders' vee transfers motion from the crank to the cams; one chain on the crank's right end drives the jackshaft, which in turn drives the other two chains, one to each cylinder bank.

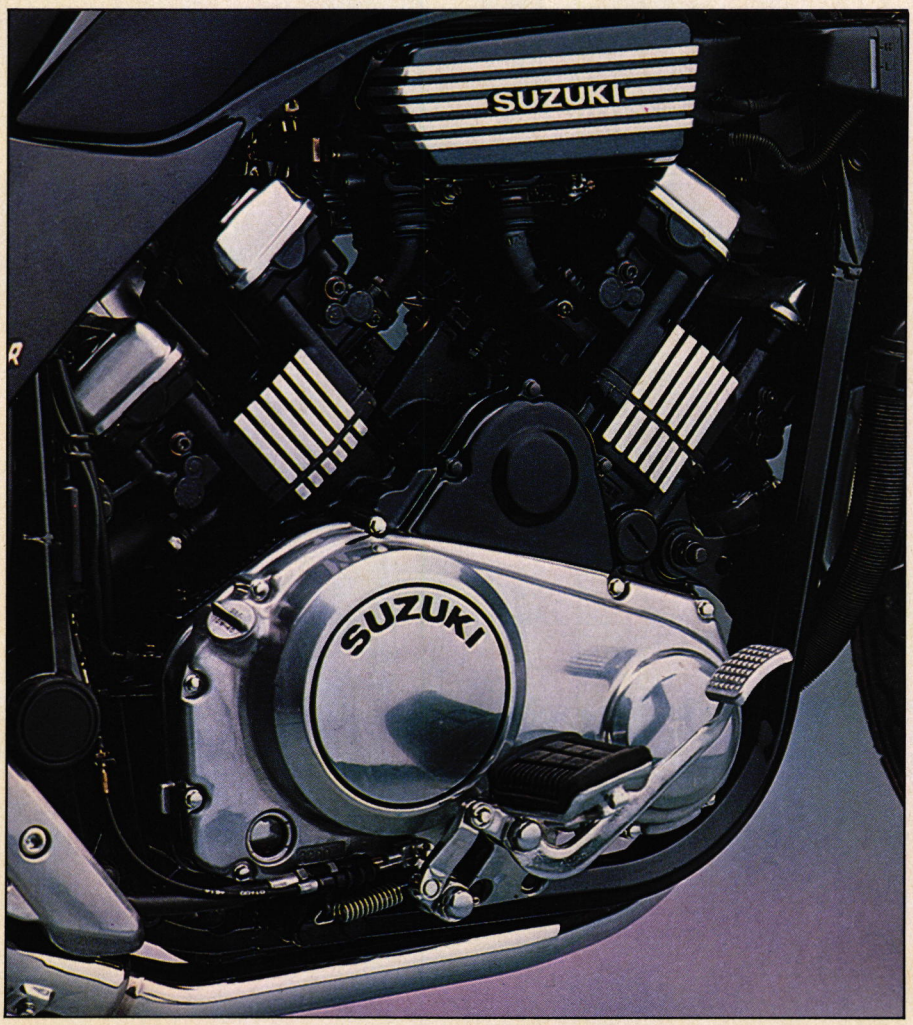
Another fundamental in which Suzuki

Continued



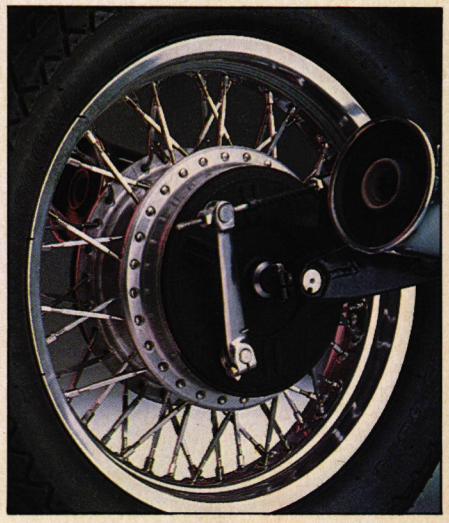
Madura has basic boulevardier's garb

Round gauges and teardrop tank.



Suzuki designed the Madura's 82-degree vee-four with low maintenance in mind

So you can spend more time in the saddle, not in the garage.



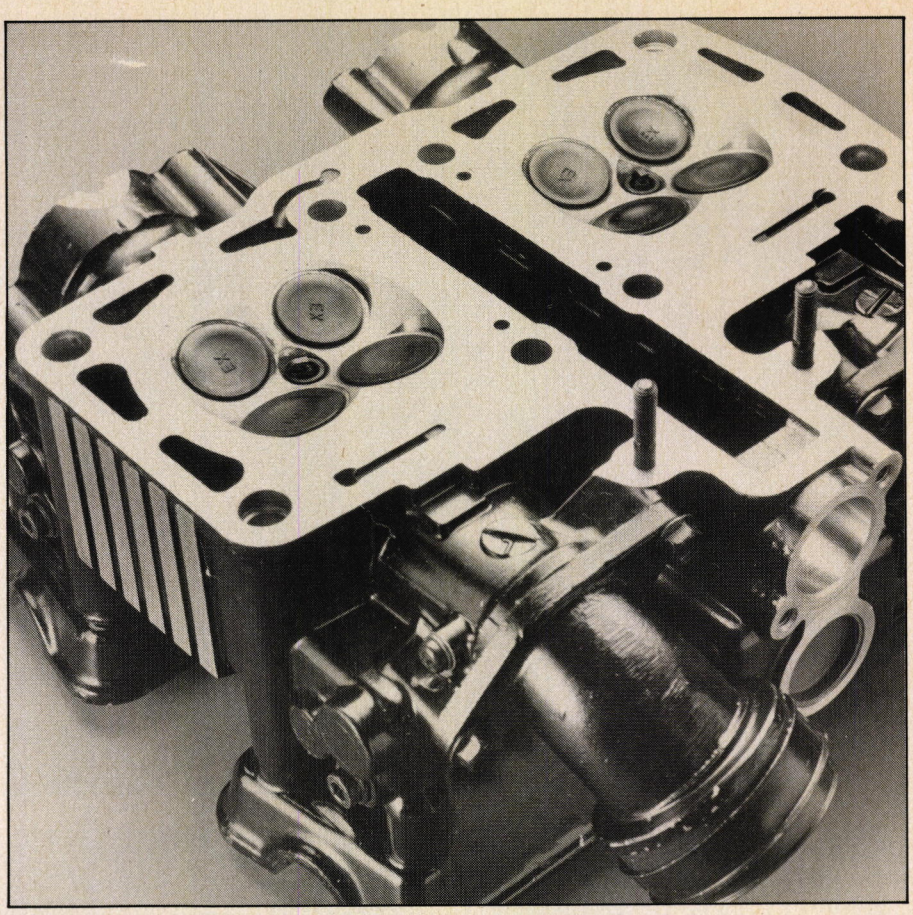
Chromed rims lace up with flat spokes

All the better to dazzle you with.

went its own way is in the engine's 82-degree vee-spread, and Suzuki spokesmen claim a number of advantages for this design. For example, they say the Madura motor allows better centering of mass than a 90-degree engine. Style entered into the choice, as well; with an 82-degree vee, the front cylinders don't jut way out between the frame's downtubes, something Suzuki feels is undesirable for a cruiser. Plus, Suzuki says the Madura's configuration and uneven firing order help produce an enormous amount of torque, and a staggered beat to the exhaust note for a more pleasing sound than a 90-degree motor's. And the Madura does have a rich exhaust note that is *basso* if not *profundo*, which should find favor among boulevard riders.

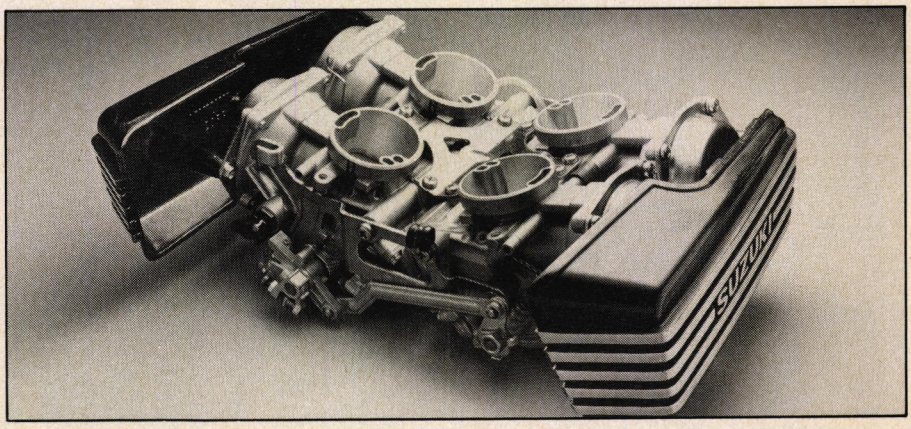
More important, those of the cruiser persuasion will appreciate the Madura's chassis performance, too. In its element, the bike has a pleasingly taut mechanical feel, and, thanks to a low center of gravity and the leverage provided by its wide handlebar, the Madura steers with satisfying ease and quickness. The requisite cruiser ergonomics, which include a pullback bar, forward-mounted footpegs and a deep-dish saddle, produce an upright seating position that doesn't cramp the rider the way some other cruisers' ergonomics do. Overall, the Madura's full-size rider accommodations help it fulfill its role capably for urban trolling.

Both front and rear suspension rates seem well-matched to that kind of use, and contribute to the bike's taut feel at low speeds. Despite lacking state-of-the-art suspension adjustments, the Madura does offer air-assist for its Kayaba fork and a motocross-type Full Floater rear end. But Suzuki recommends a fixed setting of 4.3 psi of air in the fork, and the shock adjusts for preload only, via a remote hydraulic adjuster. Even so, the Madura offers a plush, controlled ride without feeling vague or floaty. The fork and shock have different areas of expertise, though, depending on the size of the



Cylinder heads employ Suzuki's four-valve, Twin Swirl Combustion Chambers

A proven formula using existing technology.

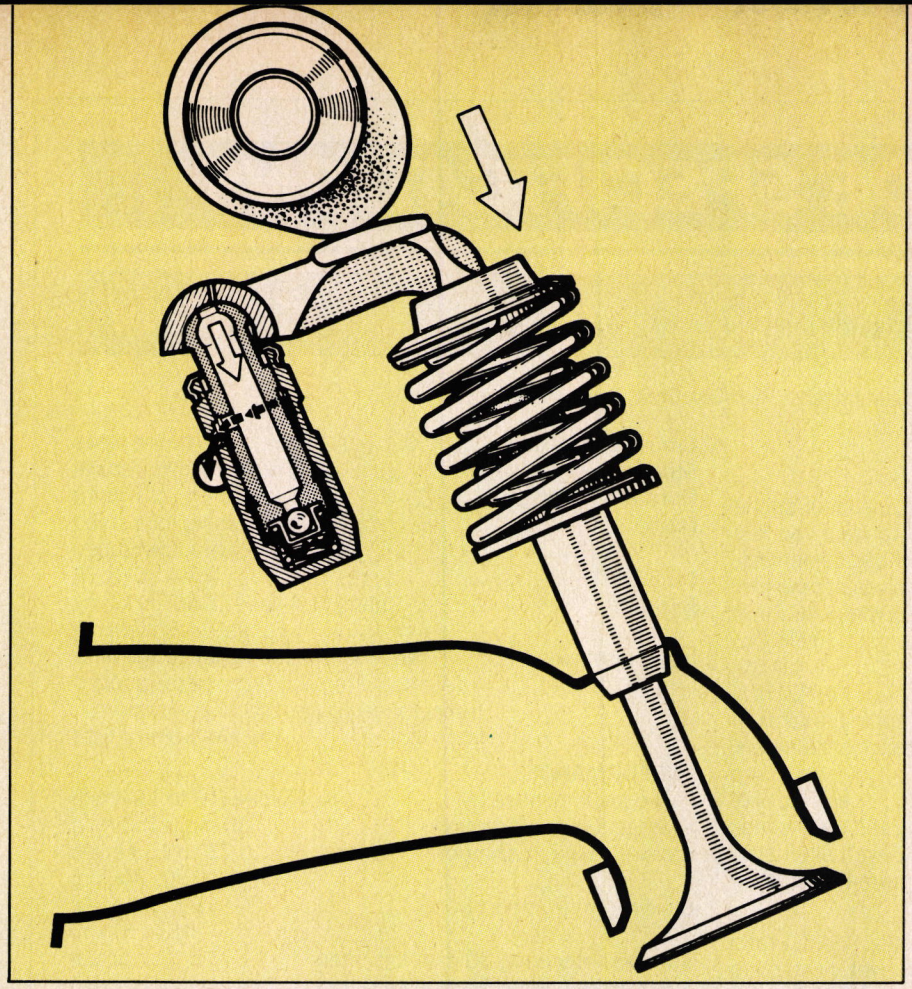


GV700GL breathes through a bank of 33mm downdraft Mikuni constant-vacuum carburetors

But they provide asthmatic throttle response at certain engine speeds.

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Suzuki GV700GL Madura-'85	13.307/102.15	111	546	143
Honda Nighthawk S-'84	12.048/109.75	125	492	125
Kawasaki KZ700-'84	12.433/107.01	127	483	132
Harley-Davidson XLX-61-'83	13.459/95.94	106	488	128
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	12.906/100.78	127	484	132
Yamaha 920 Virago-'83	12.835/101.46	108	503	138



Madura's hydraulic lash-adjusters strongly resemble a Honda design

And lets the valve train function with grace under pressure.

surface irregularities: The fork outperforms the shock over small, abrupt bumps, while the rear end works better over larger bumps and holes. Neither end works especially well over really nasty stuff, though.

However, the same attributes that make the Madura fit for cruiser duty limit it severely for most other kinds of riding. For example, the sense of roominess vanishes on long rides, because the seat/peg/bar relationship inhibits rider movement. Other elements discourage even short-hop touring, too: The tank barely holds enough fuel to get the bike 90 miles before going on reserve, and over sharp freeway paving joints the rear suspension serves up Joe-Frazier-quality body blows. And even moderately fast riding points out the soft suspension's shortcomings for such antics. The rear shock lacks sufficient rebound damping, allowing the bike to bob and weave through corners when traveling at just slightly more than the posted limit. Plus, a shortage of cornering clearance has hard-mounted hardware smacking the pavement at even shallow lean angles.

All of which seems to place Suzuki's 700 Madura in a precarious situation. While it *is* a competent street-cruiser—carburetion problems aside—it is little more. Few other motorcycles in recent memory have depended as heavily on styling for their success, and the Madura's styling isn't substantially different from that of other boulevardiers. And other cruisers have offered *something*—power, handling, or better ridability—besides just their looks.

Then again, maybe Suzuki is right to have pursued styling so completely. But we're not convinced; there's another 700-class cruiser that offers more performance, one that won't limit its owner as severely to one specialized type of riding. And Honda calls it a Magna. •

Nits:

- All four rubber intake manifolds split.
- Big, ribbed handgrips are uncomfortable.
- Bike often goes on reserve before low-fuel warning light comes on.
- Primary cover heats up rider's right foot.

Picks:

- Switches are large and easy to use.
- Security chain and lock are included.
- Shock's preload adjustment requires no tools.
- Fused accessory terminal is provided.

Ride Review

• It's easy for me to give high marks to Suzuki's new 700 Madura, because the basics all seem to have been covered. I can even ignore such unneccessary frivolities as the hexagonal-section frame tubing and the 1-inch-diameter handlebar. Other than the Madura's painfully short-haul seat and a primary drive case that tries to bake a rider's right foot into Boot Wellington, the GV700 is a slick, balanced package.

But while it's clear that Suzuki did its homework in Cruiser 101, it's equally clear that there was some cheating on the final exam. There's so much Magna in this Madura that Honda dealers should be allowed to perform Madura warranty work. I can accept imitation as a form of flattery, but Suzuki's version of the ultimate vee-four cruiser is some 37 pounds heavier—and overweight forgeries I don't need. *—Larry Works*

• So what if the Madura has a hummer vee-four motor? For me, the bike has all the limitations of a boulevardier—without the virtues. The riding position is unforgivable and unforgiving, and the sloppy chassis kept me from whizzing through the twisties, because the bike continually sparked the pavement with essential metal parts.

Nope, the Madura is designed only for the short-hop show. The irony is that the bike doesn't have the sweat-and-grunt appeal of a *real* boulevard cruiser (read: Harley). My old Suzuki 350 was more titillating than this boulevard brawler poseur.

If you just want a high-bar, cruiser-type vee-four as a commuter, the Madura's okay. But I like motorcycles that *do* something besides being high-tech art deco. *—David Mallet*

• If I'm going to spend more than three grand for a bike that's as much a clothing accessory as a means of transportation, the last thing I want it to do is make me look like one of the crowd. To my mind, a cruiser is supposed to help me look tough and self-confident, but the Madura's me-too styling makes me feel self-conscious. Instead of coming up with a new look to go with its vee-four engine, Suzuki followed the well-ridden path of Honda's Magna and ended up with just another mass-produced moto-medallion.

What hurts is that Suzuki is *capable* of building a motorcycle with original styling—the Katana cafe-racer proved it. That bike was bold and different, and it made me feel daring just thinking about riding it. All I feel when I'm riding the Madura, though, is peer pressure.

—Paul Van Zuyle

Continued

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Suzuki GV700GL Madura — street

IMPORTER: U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp., 3251 East Imperial Highway, Brea, California 92621

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $3549

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled four-stroke 82-degree tandem vee-four
Valve arrangement . . . . . double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . 69.0mm x 46.7mm
Displacement 698.5cc
Compression ratio 10.5:1
Engine redline . . . . . 10,750 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . four 33mm Mikuni constant-vacuum
Air filter . . . . . disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 245-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 14-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . helical gears; 1.897:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Transmission-to-driveshaft drive . . . . . spiral-bevel gears; 1.067:1 ratio
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel drive . . . . . spiral-bevel gears; 3.091:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.500	15.641	4.64
II	1.778	11.124	6.52
III	1.391	8.703	8.34
IV	1.154	7.220	10.05
V	0.960	6.006	12.08
VI	0.806	5.043	14.38

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . Kayaba air-spring, 39mm stanchion tube diameter/5.9 in. (149mm)
Rear . . . . . single Kayaba shock, 11mm spring preload range within 19¾ turns of adjuster/4.0 in. (102mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 10.7-in. (273mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . drum, single-leading shoe, cable operated

TIRES

Front . . . . . 110/80-19 59H Bridgestone Mag Mopus-G515
Rear . . . . . 140/80-16 68H Bridgestone Mag Mopus-G514

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

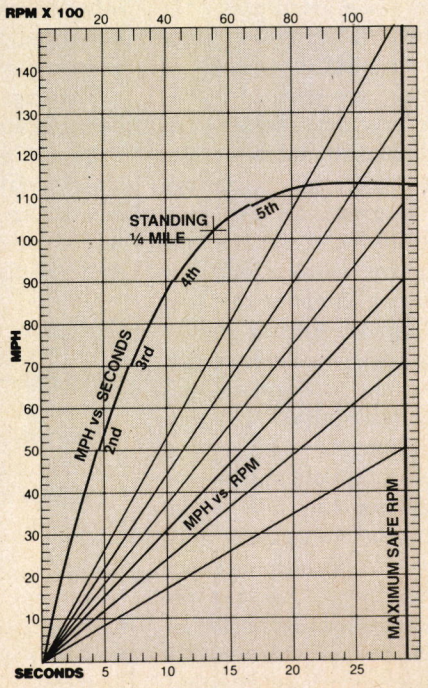
Weight . . . . . 546 lbs. (247.7kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 46.2% front, 53.8% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 1045 lbs. (474kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 478 lbs. (217kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 61.9 in. (1571mm)
Seat height . . . . . 31.1 in. (789mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 29.9 in. (760mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 13.0 in. (331mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 6.1 in. (156mm), at exhaust pipes
Steering head angle . . . . . 29.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 4.57 in. (116mm)
Frame . . . . . hexagonal and tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.4 qt. (3.2l)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 3.4 gal. (12.8l), including 1.2 gal. (4.6l) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, coolant temperature gauge, digital gear indicator, low-fuel warning light

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 23 to 45 mpg (10 to 19 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 35 mpg (15 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 78 to 153 miles (126 to 246km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . . 28 to 54 miles (45 to 87km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 29 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 52 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 13.307 sec., 102.15 mph (164 km/h)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 111 mph (179 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 33 ft. (10.1m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 143 ft. (43.6m)

WARRANTY: 12 months, unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLORS: maroon or black



All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

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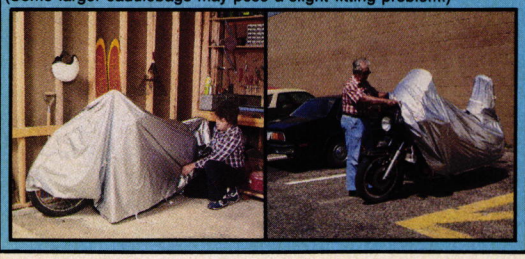

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BETTER THAN STOCK:

Yamaha RZ350

Bolt on down the road.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

• Somewhere in almost every sport-rider's heart is a place for a light, responsive and *fast* two-stroke twin. So, when Yamaha resurrected the two-stroke streetbike with its 1984 RZ350, many riders found their heart's desire made in metal, beckoning from the showroom floor. But as anyone who ever owned an air-cooled RD knows, half the fun is in making one of the little road-burners better than stock. And, liquid-cooling and Power Valves notwithstanding, the RZ is no different.

One of the quickest, surest ways to make an RZ350 faster is to replace the stock pipes with a pair of aftermarket expansion chambers. The original pipes, with their catalytic convertors, weigh 26 pounds, and cost $300 *each* to replace. Of course, practically every pipemaker in the country already knows that, and there are dozens of systems on the market for the RZ. After examining a garageful of RZ replacement pipes, we settled on an Allspeed system from RSC Performance; we found they significantly increase low- and midrange power, without crippling the bike's top end. RSC suggests changing the main jets from the stock #230 to #250, and removing the two snorkels that restrict flow through the airbox. With those modifications, the engine has more power all the way up to 10,500 rpm, well past the stocker's 9500-rpm redline. And although the Allspeed pipes, at eight pounds each, weigh more than some other RZ pipes, they're also *quiet*—to our ears, even quieter than stock. That's important, since the wheelie-prone RZ already attracts plenty of attention.

To get that extra power to the ground, the RZ needs better tires than the stock Yokohamas, too. We chose a pair of Metzelers, a 100/90-18 ME33 Laser in front, and a 4.25/85-18 ME99A for the rear, both with sport-compound rubber, which provides exceptional traction. Although some race-compound street tires don't stick well until they're hot, the Metzelers work well over a wide range of temperatures. Both tires slide—predictably—when pushed past the the limits of adhesion, and traction can be regained easily. In exchange for that increased stick, we expected to get tread-life measurable with a stopwatch, but the Metzelers had half their tread left after almost 2000 miles of street riding and three days spent at the racetrack.

Next on the list was suspension. Put bluntly, the RZ has a single shock that's, well, shocking. Our stock damper was underdamped when new, and it deteriorated from that point. Moto-X Fox came to the rescue with a Twin-Clicker reservoir shock made especially for the RZ. This unit has both rebound- and compression-damping adjusters, as well as a preload-adjustment collar. The steel-body shock uses the original RZ spring, and greatly improves the 350's handling and ride.

To help make the front suspension work as well as the rear, we installed an ATK fork brace on the RZ's front end. The Yamaha's

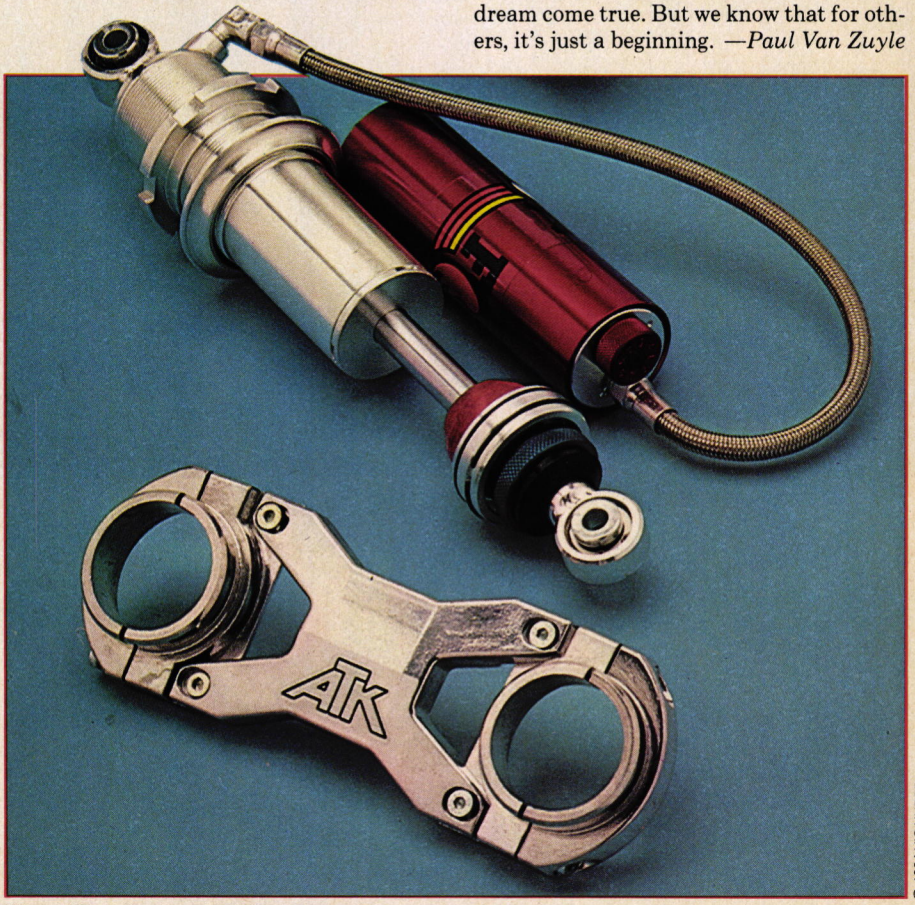
35mm tubes don't flex much to start with, but the brace further limits fork twisting under steering input. Combined with the Metzeler tires, the braced front end helps the RZ steer with precision.

Finally, we reworked the seat with Yamaha's Seat Cowl; it doesn't make our RZ go any faster, but it sure makes it *look* speedy. This accessory was reviewed in our July 1984 issue; since then, we've made a couple of improvements. First, inspired by the storage compartment in the tailsection of the Laverda RGS 1000, we cut away the RZ's seat where it's covered by the cowling, leaving just the seat base. This created a much larger storage compartment than existed before. Second, we had the exposed portion of the saddle and the tailpiece plug upholstered in blue vinyl to match the bike's striping. Together, these two changes make our RZ seat both useful and unique.

All the parts we chose can be installed without any special tools or skills. The end result is a bike that's significantly improved, enough to enable it to run with the very best four-stroke middleweights. For some, our better-than-stock RZ might be a dream come true. But we know that for others, it's just a beginning. —*Paul Van Zuyle*

Manufacturer's addresses and suggested retail prices:

Moto-X Fox shock $295.00
Moto-X Fox, Dept. CG,
520 McGlincy Lane,
Campbell, California 95008
Allspeed exhaust pipes $169.95
RSC Performance, Dept. CG,
P.O. Box 14664,
Atlanta, Georgia 30324
ATK Fork Brace $69.95
ATK Leitner Corp., Dept. CG,
2650-C Walnut Ave.,
Tustin, California 92680
Metzeler tires:
Front—100/90-18 ME33 Laser $84.95
Rear—4.25/85-18 ME99A $89.95
Metzeler USA, Dept. CG,
144 Railroad Ave., Suite 203
Edmonds, Washington 98020
RZ350 Seat Cowl $144.95
Available from Yamaha dealers nationwide.
Upholstery work, approximately $80.



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Moto-X Fox shock and ATK fork brace improve handling
And underscore the RZ's GP heritage.

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THREE WISHES:

THE Perfect GARAGE

True confessions of motolust.

BY DAVID MALLET

Ask yourself the same question we did: "If you could pick three motorcycles to comprise a perfect garage, what would they be?" No strings, except each choice must have existed at some time. Three bikes to live with from now until the day you become too feeble to work the starter button—or the kickstarter.

When the question first circulated around the CYCLE GUIDE offices, there were immediate cries of "Amazonas," "1967 Honda CB450" and "Ariel Huntmaster." But as soon as the free-for-all died down, we got serious about answering the question. It wasn't as easy as we'd thought. If we'd been able to choose 20 apiece—or even 10—there wouldn't have been such a premium on choosing carefully. Having only three makes the choice critical.

And picking three favorites is different from evaluating test bikes or choosing a Motorcycle of the Year. Those involve objective decisions; this is pure passion. With tests, even if our personal opinions of a motorcycle enter into the evaluation, we still can determine how well the parts work, and how a motorcycle compares to other bikes in its class. For our individual perfect motorcycle garages, though, the choices might be terminal oil-leakers, uglier than Mr. T's twin sister—or have other "virtues" apparent only to a proud owner.

Before you open the doors to our perfect motorcycle garages, though, you should understand that motojournalists lust after bikes just as much as anyone else does. We ride a warehouse full of test bikes each year, but we don't keep them in our permanent stables. Each of us knows the misery of an empty checking account and the chill of a banker's glare. For us, the perfect garage is as much a fantasy as it is for you.

Yet, it turned out that we tempered our choices with reality. Any of us could have chosen 30 Yamaha OW80s siamesed together at the footpegs—but no one did. In fact, all but a few of these motorcycles are affordable production machines.

We also could have chosen nothing but hypersonic speedballs. For us, a day isn't complete until we've bevelled a footpeg or two. Yet, few of these motorcycles are record-setters. But maybe our choosing these bikes instead of total exotica is the point: The greatest part of the perfect motorcycle garage is that it's so easily made real.

Continued

PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHRIS EASTMAN

A mid-winter night's dream

Motorcycles are meant to be ridden, but for one to make it into *my* perfect garage, it has to do more than get me from point A to point B. I spent enough winters knee-deep in snow to appreciate the attraction a bike can generate just sitting on its sidestand. For that reason, each one of these bikes is welcome in my garage—or my living room—anytime.

Of all my choices, the BMW was perhaps the easiest, because as far as I'm concerned, motorcycles were made for touring. But my definition of touring is a three-day weekend, a criminally overstuffed tankbag and 1000 miles of two-lane; the K100RS—warts and all—fits my requirements to a T. It's the kind of bike I can ride for an entire day, knowing it will take me anywhere I'd care to go and deliver me with grace, style and comfort. But if you drop the shroud of touring, the RS would still fit into my carriage house. The K100 feels as if it were machined from a solid billet, and it's that feeling that makes me willing to put up with its vibration and quirks. And just looking at it makes me reach for the Rand McNally and start checking the calendar.

The Sportster can't be so easily explained, but to those who've ridden one, it needn't be. The mid-Sixties XLCH is to motorcycling what a hooker's come-on is to romance: crude, rude and unmistakable. The 55-cubic-inch "Competition Hot" XLs were intended to be the meanest machines on two wheels, and at the time they were. Wimps could opt for the electric-start XLH, but the CHs, with shorty duals, kickstart and Fairbanks-Morse magnetos, were the essence of motorcycling: an engine, two wheels and little else. But there's more to my choice than simple nostalgia: For me, there's still no better-looking—or better-sounding—motorcycle.

My idea of a sportbike has nothing to do with earthshaking horsepower; I want something that's light, nimble and responsive. That's why the RZ350 found a home here. It has exactly the kind of reflexes that appeal to me. But the major reason I picked the Yamaha was not for what it is, but what it *can be*. A new shock, new tires and aftermarket pipes give the RZ the kind of racetrack-honed feel that lets you understand why Yamaha two-strokes have been such a force in GP roadracing. And appropriately enough, the RZ looks the part, too. The red-and-white paint and red low-boy frame make the little Yamaha look right at home in a racetrack paddock—or my garage. And my memories of long winters are still strong enough to make that an important part of my selection. —*Jim Miller*

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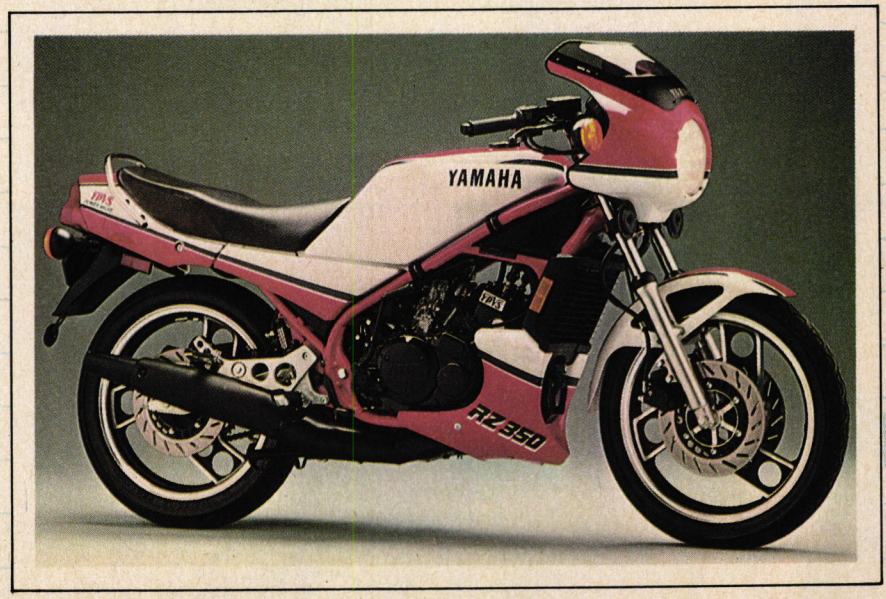
MOTORCYCLE COURTESY OF HARLEY-DAVIDSON OF VENTURA



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THE Perfect GARAGE

The half-liter warehouse

Picking three bikes sounds easy. It's not, though, at least not if you're as fond of new models as I am. I admit to being fickle when it comes to motorcycles; there's always something just about to be released that threatens to render my favorites outdated in one fell swoop. And when a three-bike stable has to satisfy *all* my riding needs, the choice of players can't be taken lightly.

The choice for first spot in my perfect garage, was, at least, straightforward. If I could have just one bike until the day I stop riding, I wouldn't hesitate in picking. I'd head straight for a Honda VF500F—with only minor twinges of regret at new-model time. Not only is the 500 Interceptor the best-handling sportbike I've ever swung a leg over, it's perfectly willing to perform day-in, day-out riding tasks without complaint. For me, anyway, the Miniceptor is just as thrilling as an RZ500, and far more forgiving of rider error. I don't even care that the VF is cramped for two-up riding. It's perfect for one-upsmanship, the way motorcycles were intended to be ridden.

Second choice had to be a dirtbike. I dearly love pavement, but I spent too much time crisscrossing Arizona deserts in my formative moto-years to turn my back on the dirt. Nothing I know of goes out of date faster than dirtbike technology, but if I've got to plant my feet someplace and watch the parade of new dirtbikes pass me by, I'd just as soon do it with a Husqvarna 400WR. I don't really care that it's the first liquid-cooled Open-classer, only that it's good enough to make me feel like I know what I'm doing. I can admire a bike that's kind to my ego.

But I sweated over the last choice. My riding habits dictate that it should have been a tourer, and my preferences in engine performance would have made it a Yamaha Venture Royale. But when I went out to my garage—the real one attached to my house, not the perfect one of this story—I found a bike that I just couldn't do without. Out there, under a coating of dust somewhat thicker than I'd care to admit, was my third choice, a raucous hybrid single named Yanx that started out as a '78 Yamaha SR500. Not much on it is close to stock, which satisfies the tinkerer in me, but the best part is pulling into a gas station to top off the six-gallon tank and having some bystander saunter over and announce: "Yanx, huh? I didn't know they still made them."

Besides, since the Husky and Honda cover dirt and street performance pretty well for me, I figure I can afford a motorcycle that doesn't go faster or handle better than everything else—it just makes me *feel* better. —*Larry Works*

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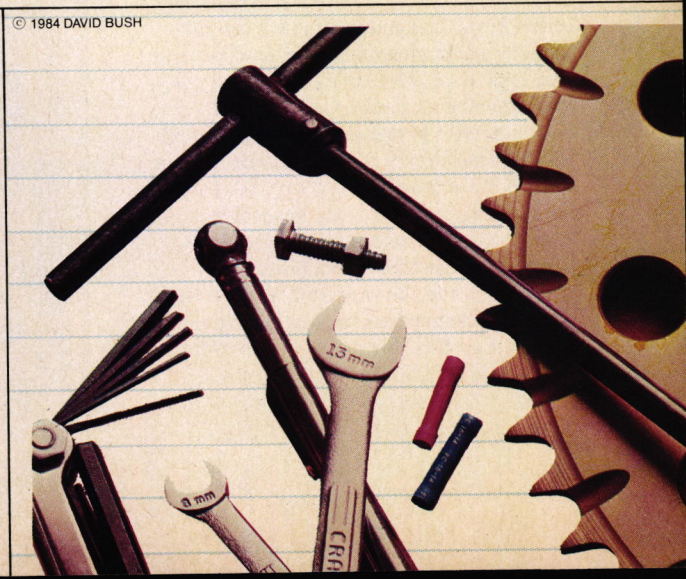


Beauty and the best

I toyed with the idea of creating balance in my perfect motorcycle garage: a comfortable touring bike, a speedster, something multi-purpose. But passion prevailed over logic: There are *so* many ho-hum motorcycles that function perfectly well, thank you, but which could never be my true *amorata*. Every time I open the garage doors I want to feel a meaningful hiccup in my heart.

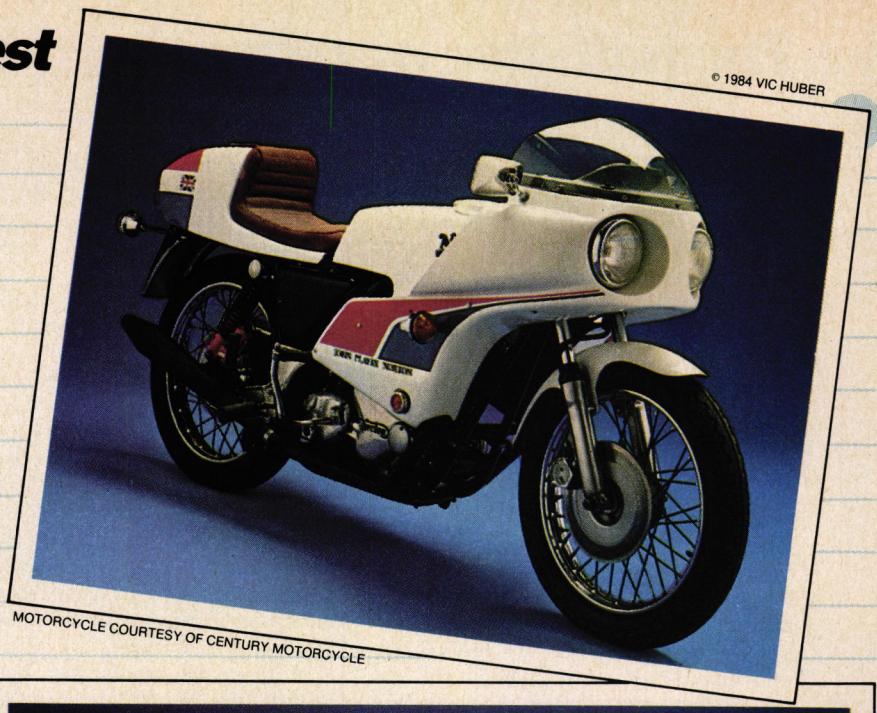
Even though I like taking impromptu, trips, I can live without a softy long-distance bike. I also don't care a bit that the Hailwood and Norton seem similar (they're not). I've hankered after both for so long, I'll be unfulfilled until I have the pink slips to each in my hands.

The John Player Special ranked as one of Norton's best: The fairing and bodywork made it look like no other motorcycle, and the Commando running gear underneath meant the bike dissected roads and was no slouch for power. Motorcycling—even twisty-roading it—is more than having a bazillion horsepower on tap: There's the elusive conjunction of beauty, craftsmanship, exhaust burble, mechanical harmony and direct-input handling. The Norton's lack of technological sophistication is unimportant. This motorcycle is timeless by virtue of its balance of grace and force.

The Hailwood simply is a stunner. If I could restrain myself from riding it, I'd pack it in Cosmolene as a hedge against inflation. But the Duck is too provocative not to ride. The paint scheme is bold, the conscription of various mechanical parts sublime in execution. A Ducati Diana Mark III was my first motorcycle (neatly explaining my fixation on Ducati engines), and I also owned a beater 750S that didn't do things as well as some newer bikes—but it was always more fun to ride than anything else I owned.

Bimota's 550-Kawasaki-powered TT2 satisfies my need for a more modern motorcycle—without further concession to the dated blahness more than a few new bikes have. The small Bimota's aircraft-quality workmanship is near-flawless, and the engine satisfies my need for refinement in a powerplant.

My perfect garage *is* one-sided. But all of these motorcycles evoke *l'aventura*. For me, that's what riding is about. It's easy to be seduced by new gizmos, spaceship looks and double-*g* acceleration—but this perfect garage houses machines I'll thrillingly ride 20 years from now—even if I'm so arthritic someone has to help me bump-start the Norton. —*David Mallet*



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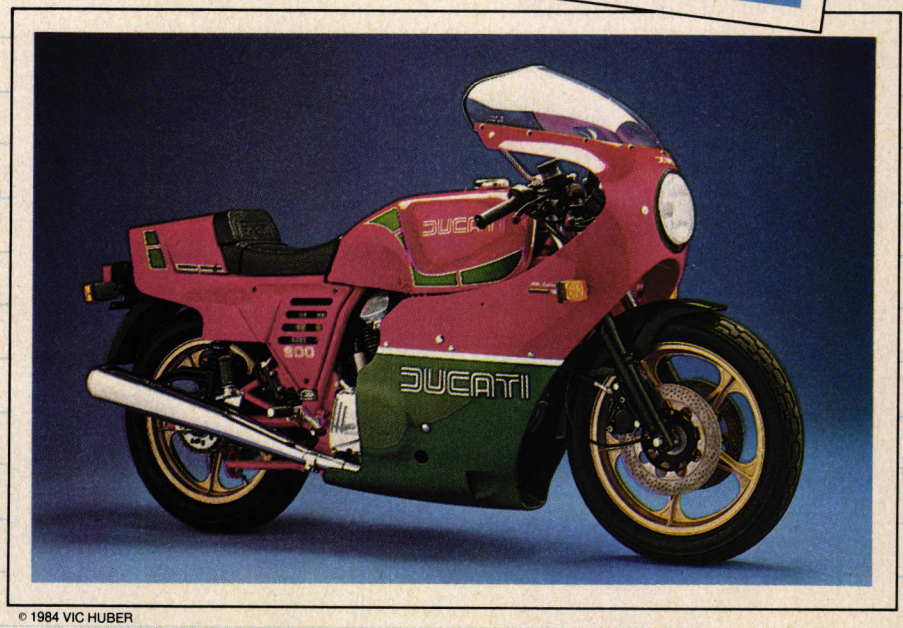
MOTORCYCLE COURTESY OF CENTURY MOTORCYCLE



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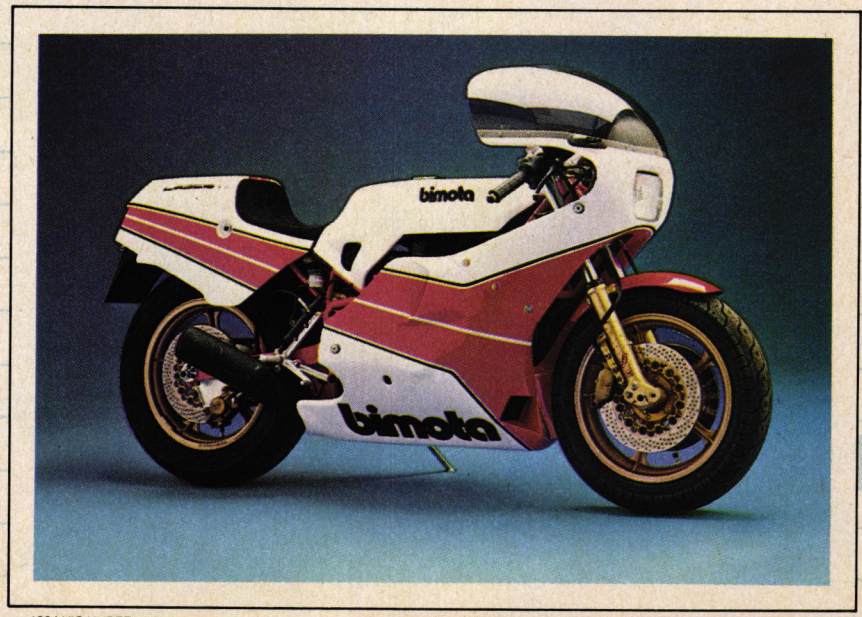

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MOTORCYCLE COURTESY OF PERFORMANCE WORKS, BIMOTA WEST

Real steel

Pick "three bikes for the perfect garage?" For some of us, it just can't be done. The inventory of my fantasy garage turns over about once every three months. Still, my *real* garage at present does indeed hold three motorcycles, none of which I would trade for any other—this month. So, understanding the ultimate futility of seeking the One True Threesome, my garage looks like this:

First on the list is my BMW R100RS. Even after nearly 2000 miles on the superb new K-bikes, my Blue Beemer Boxer is still my first choice for a long ride to unknown parts—or for a short ride into downtown. Some motojournalists of my acquaintance disagree with me about every point of its performance and packaging, but so what? Suffice it to say that for me, the bike is an ideal combination of power, handling and comfort for the real world. Whenever I have to eat whole Rand McNallys full of miles, at a sporting pace, this is my first choice, especially if a sizable amount of stuff needs to go along. A three-year warranty and a nice bunch of dealers don't hurt, either. In sum, it's a bike only a crazed techno-freak could hate.

Second is Kawasaki's new Ninja. I'm also, alas, a crazed techno-freak, so I love my Ninja almost as much as I love my Boxer. The bike combines blood-boiling speed, handling, stunning engineering and, out here in Maryland, where I bought mine, rarity enough to tickle all my senses. Most gratifying of all is the breathtaking styling, which to my mind makes the machine as exciting to look at as it is to ride—which is plenty exciting, indeed. What I get with the Ninja is the ultimate distillation of the essence of the Ferrari 250LM—and if I have to explain what that means, you'll never understand why this bike is in my garage.

Finally, there's my Norton Commando Production Racer. This choice isn't just the result of pure sentiment, although the fact that the Yellow Submarine that sits next to my Ninja and Boxer is the last bike I campaigned in England does give it added importance to me. The real reason for its inclusion here is that it is the Ultimate British Vertical Twin, a bike that encapsulates the good things of that genre without most of the bad things. I don't ride it much, but when I do, its incredibly light weight, quick steering, bottomless well of torque and spartan accoutrements turn the bike into a time machine for me. On the Yellow Sub, every suburban jaunt becomes an adventure of the kind unavailable on today's so-slick, bulletproof wonderbikes—and so the ride shows me not just where we were, but how far we've come. —*Steve Thompson*

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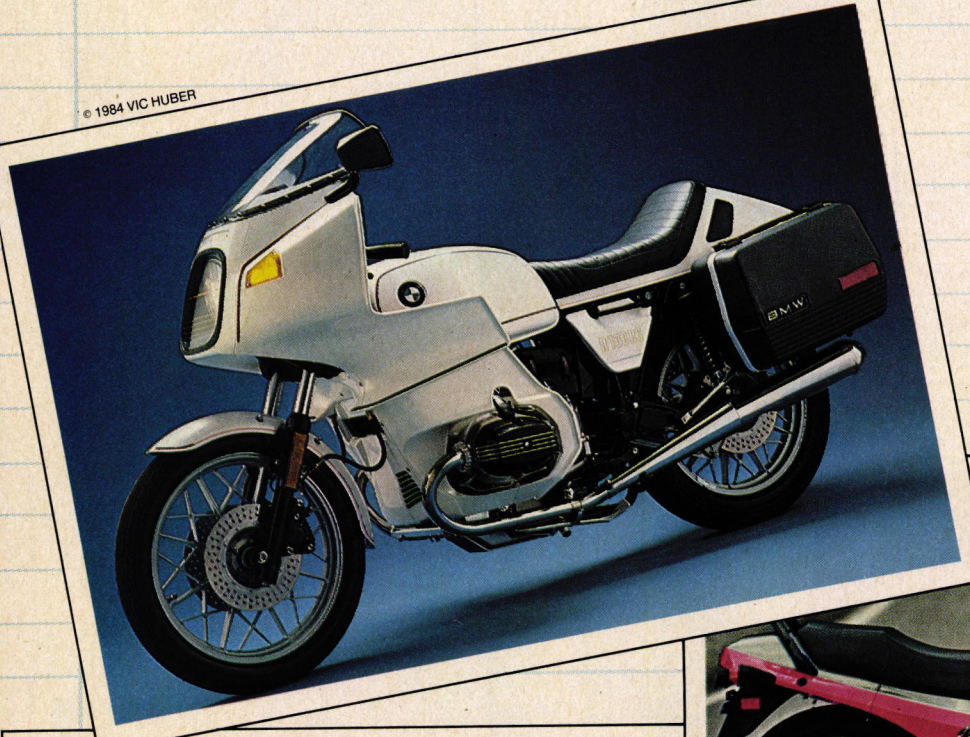

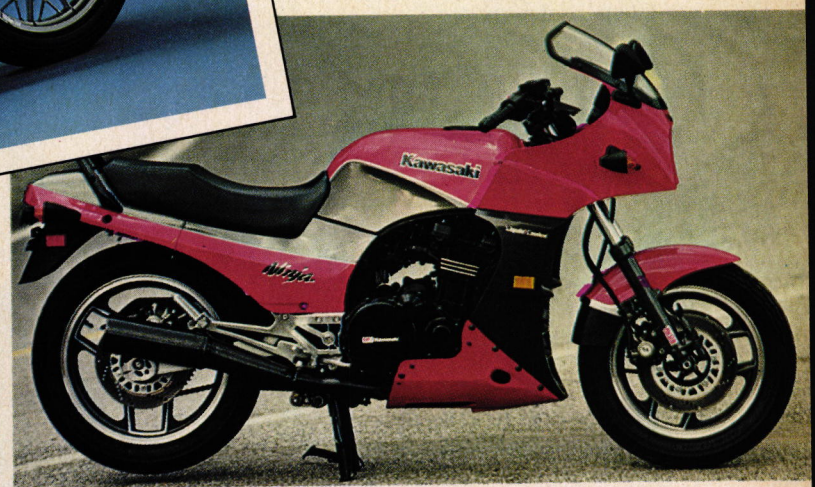

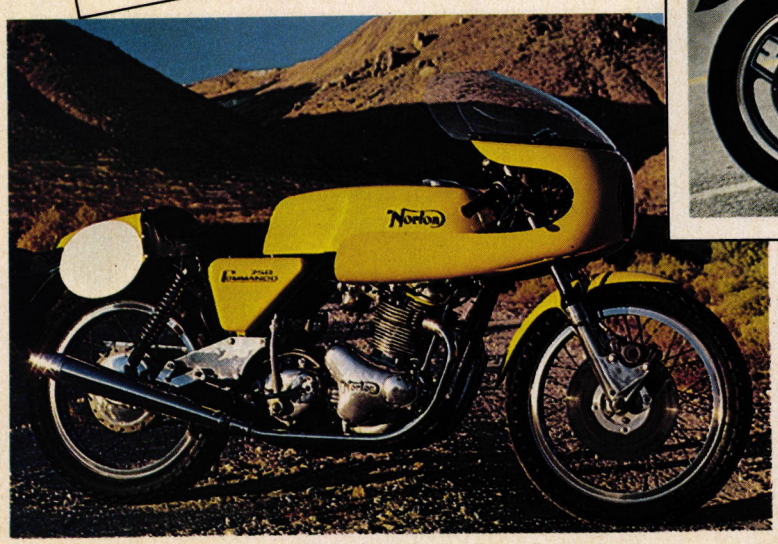

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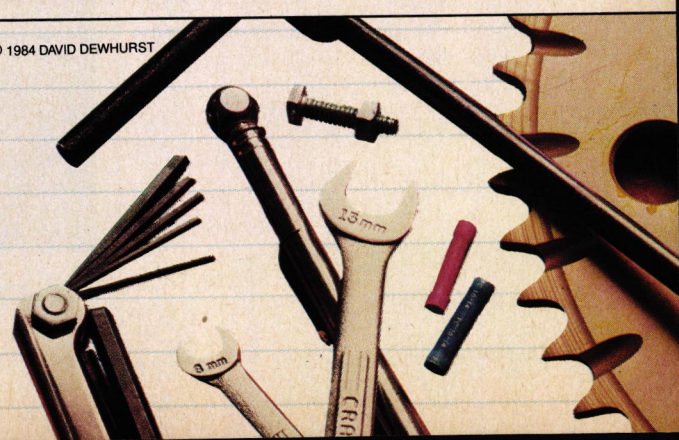


Fast approaching perfection

Standing around in the garage polishing the spokes of my motorcycles is not my idea of a good time. I like to *ride* motorcycles a lot more than I enjoy admiring them. To that end, my garage doesn't contain machines that have value because of their uniqueness or aesthetic appeal. There are no irreplaceable pieces of exotica in my stable, because I don't want to ride with the constant fear of ruining an example of art or history.

Instead, I want reponsive motorcycles that challenge me to improve my riding skills each time I use them. As it turns out, all my choices are 1984 models. That's no surprise to me, however, since the rapid pace of moto-technical improvement has made this year's bikes the best ever.

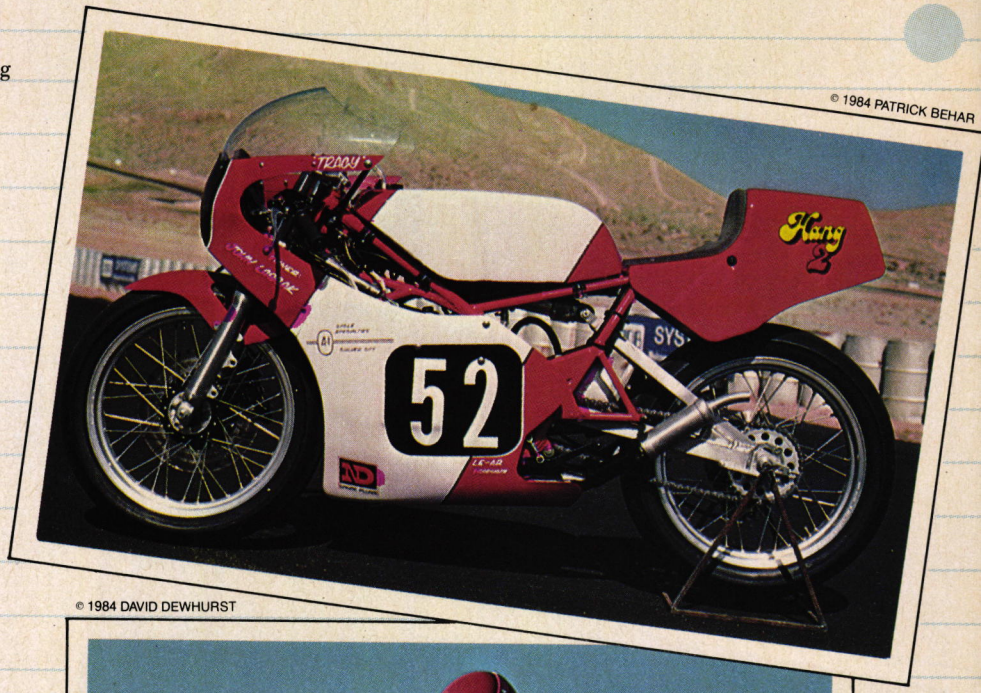
First on my list is a racer, a bike I've always wanted to own because competition is the most intense of motorcycling experiences. The Yamaha TZ250L is a state-of-the-art roadracer, the fastest way around a track on two wheels, outside of a Formula 1 machine or a factory Superbike. The TZ demands complete concentration, and rewards the thinking rider with tremendous cornering speed. It's an uncompromising machine, with a narrow, but vital, role in my garage.

For the dirt, I need a bike that's a little less specialized than a TZ. I race motocross, ride desert enduros, and just play around on my dirtbike. For this role, a Honda CR250R fills the bill. Light weight, quick steering and a flexible powerband make this bike fun whether I'm gunning for the gold, or just playing around in the puckerbushes.

But these two bikes are just for the weekends. I also need a bike that can take day-in, day-out street riding, and still deliver plenty of excitement when I get to my favorite roads. To my mind, nothing comes close to the Yamaha FJ1100 in versatility for a rider like myself, who wants to sport-tour, commute, and burn up the backroads all on one motorcycle. And considering that I do 90 percent of my riding on the street, the big FJ is the most important choice for my perfect garage.

Although there are times when another motorcycle might be better, these three bikes can take me almost anywhere I plan to go. I also like the neatness of having just six wheels, because a cluttered garage is hardly my idea of perfection.

—Paul Van Zuyle



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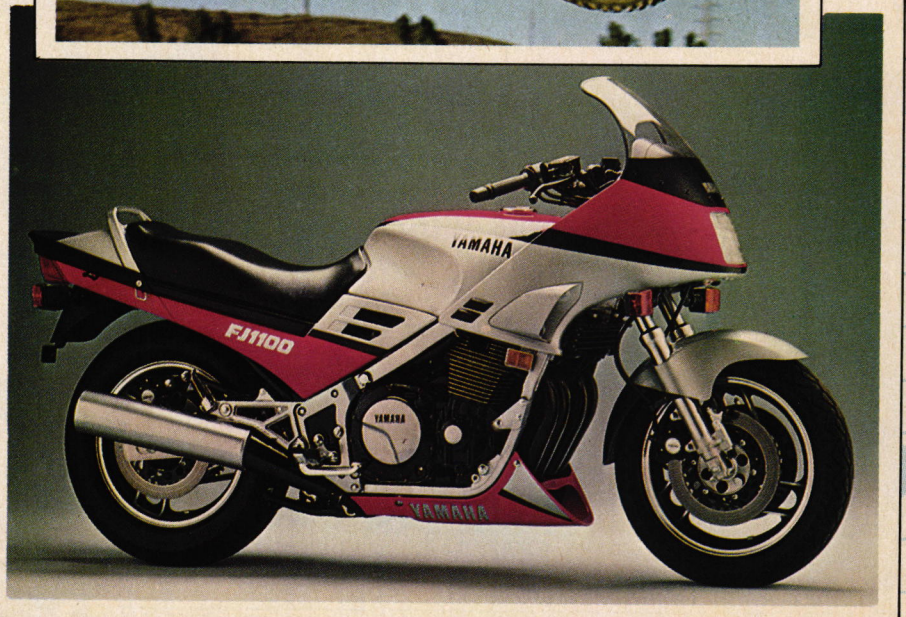

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THE Perfect GARAGE

Meet my friends

Some of my colleagues might have had a difficult time selecting bikes for their perfect garages, but not me; my choices came almost by reflex. Those choices were made based on how the motorcycles make me *feel*. Having these three in my garage would be like surrounding myself with old friends, ones that bring out the best kinds of feelings.

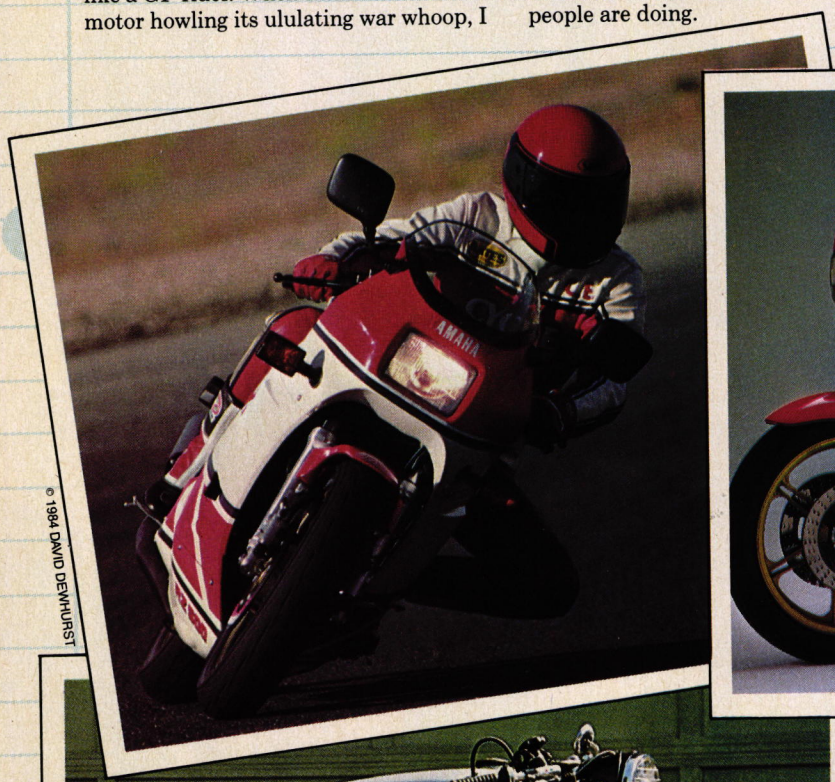
Take the Yamaha RZ500, for instance. As far as I know, no other production streetbike on the planet even approaches the RZ's taut, racetrack-honed sensations. By comparison, other sportbikes seem unnervingly vague and imprecise through corners where the RZ is stable and secure. And the RZ is brutally fast, too; when it comes on the pipe, even literbikes aren't safe from this 500's ferocious acceleration. But most of all, the Yamaha lets me feel like a GP rider. When I hear the vee-four motor howling its ululating war whoop, I can see the world through gunfighter's eyes, where every corner is an opportunity, and every rider is a challenger.

Laverda's RGS 1000 also gets a berth in my perfect garage for much the same reason as the RZ: kinesthetics at speed. High speed, that is, at twice the double nickel. At that velocity, the RGS's remarkable stability envelops me in a wonderfully secure sense of well-being, and the Laverda feels superior to almost every other device on the road. What's more, the RGS thrills me even when it's sitting still. I never tire of looking at its graceful lines, or at its polished alloy castings, things that make all those cliches about European craftsmanship ring true. In short, riding the Laverda is akin to a rolling orgy of speed, and the bike exudes such a sense of richness that I easily could find myself wondering what the poor people are doing.

The last—but certainly not the least—object of my motolust is Bultaco's 250 Metralla Mk 2. Why do I want a 17-year-old 250? Nostalgia, I suppose; my first motorcycle was a Bultaco. Besides, the Metralla was an Isle of Man TT winner in the 250 Production class, and it kindled my youthful fantasies the way few motorcycles have. I wanted a Metralla the way a teenager wants anything—with an all-consuming desire. I still do. Owning one would be the fulfillment of a boyhood dream, and riding it would be like stepping into a time machine.

As much as the RZ and the RGS, though, I picked the Metralla because of the fine, rich kaleidoscope of feelings it evokes. I don't expect anyone else to agree with my choices; after all, this is *my* perfect garage. And no one else can pick my motorcycles—or my friends.

—*Charles Everitt*



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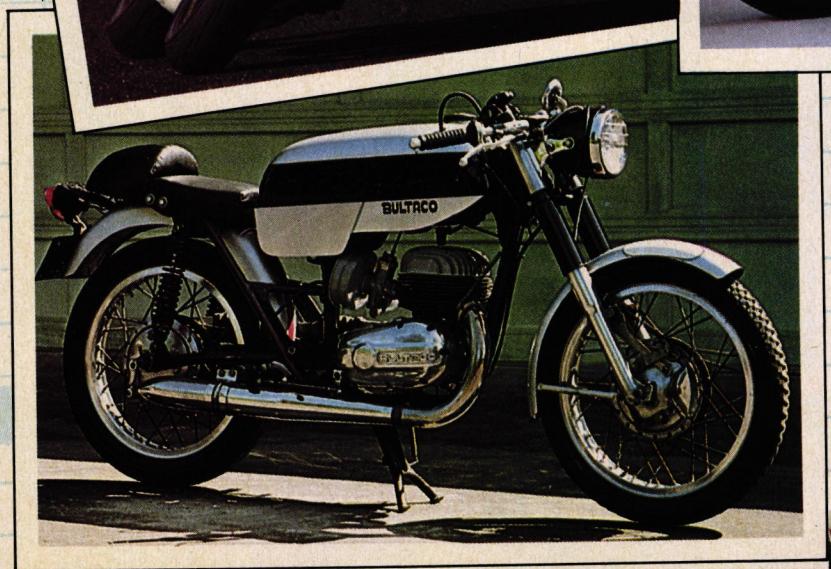

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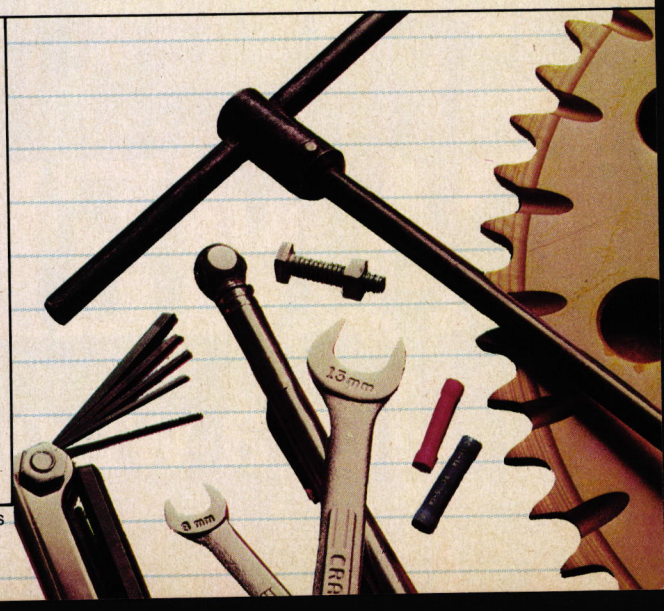

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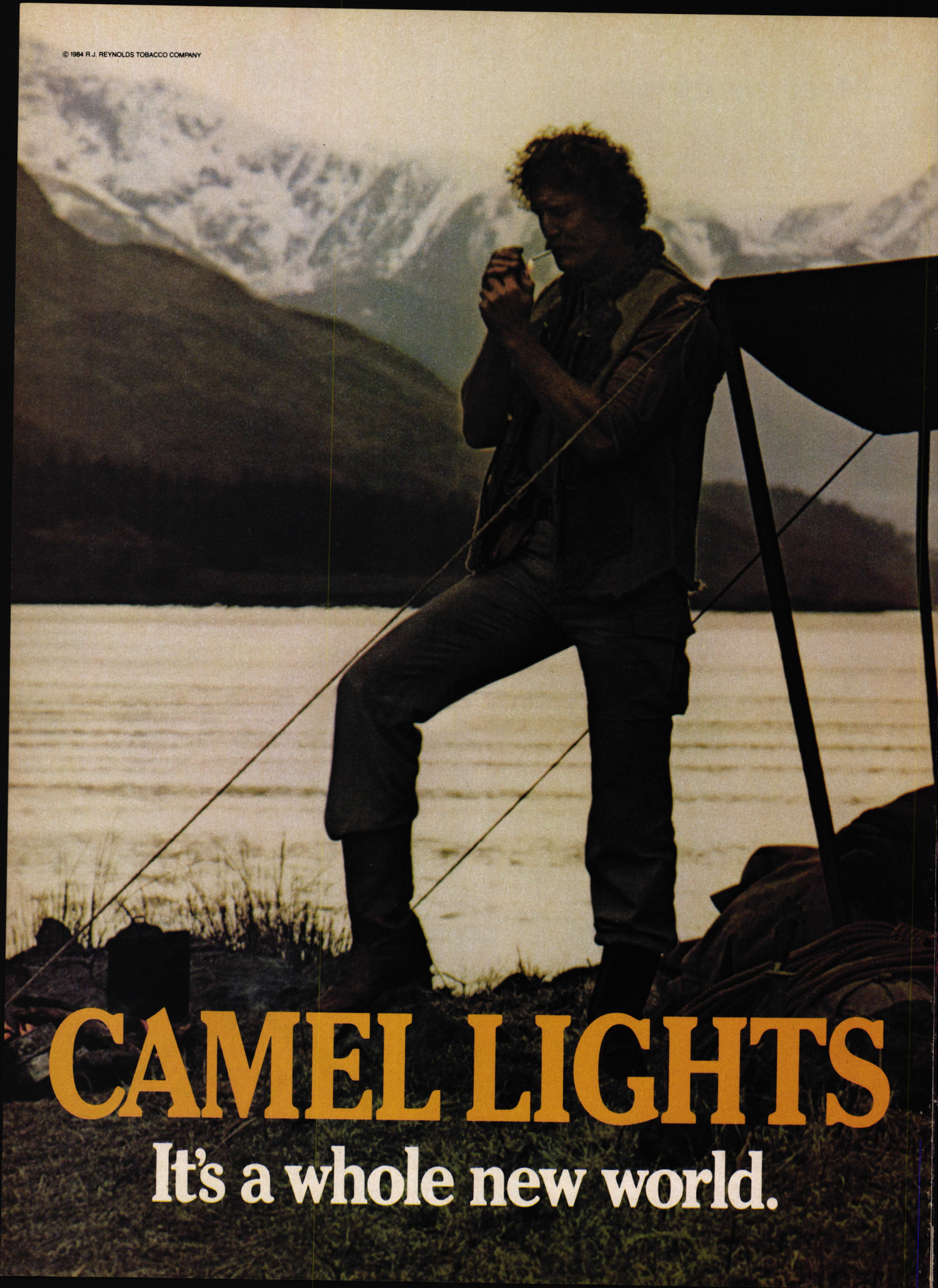

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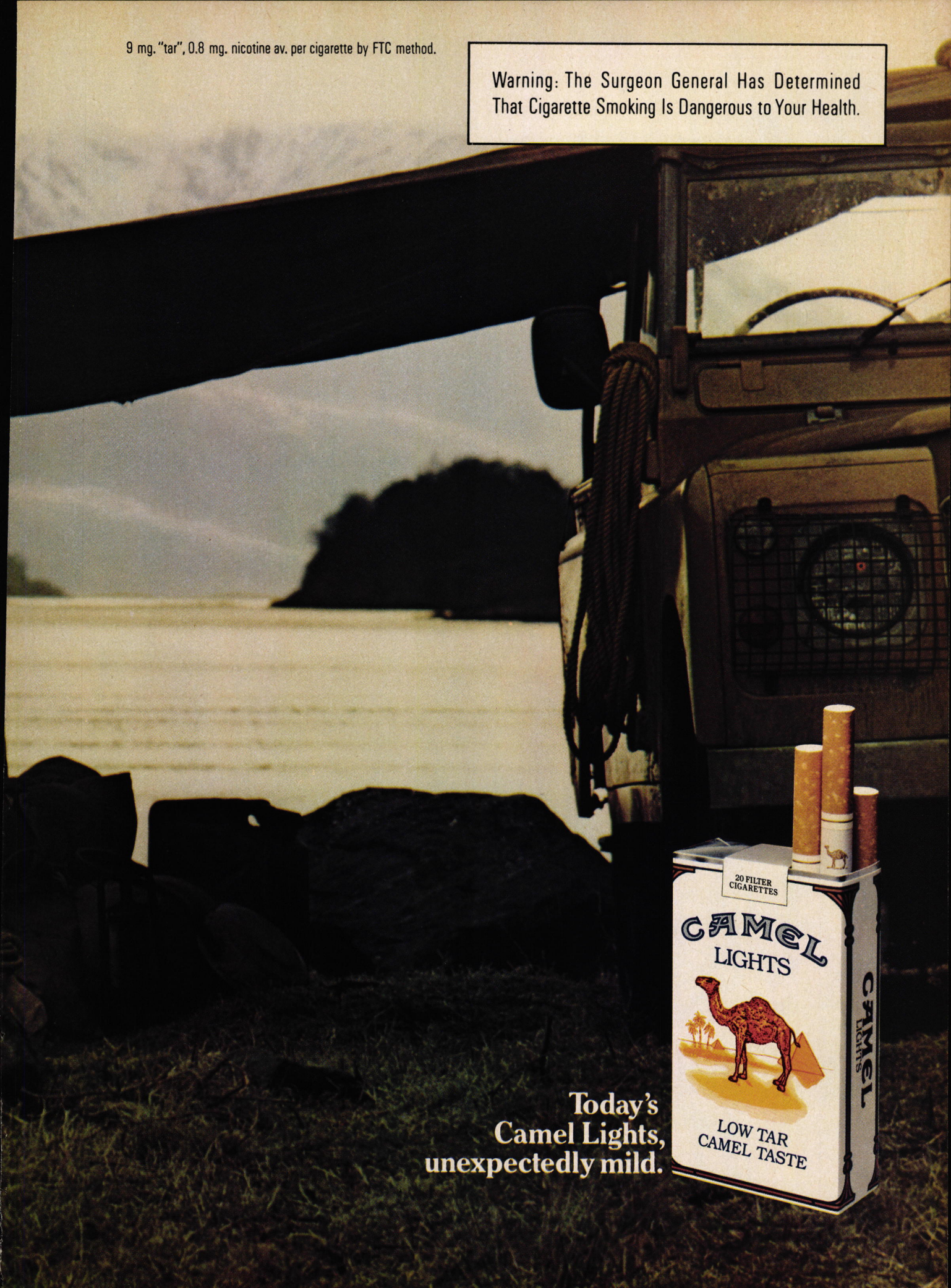
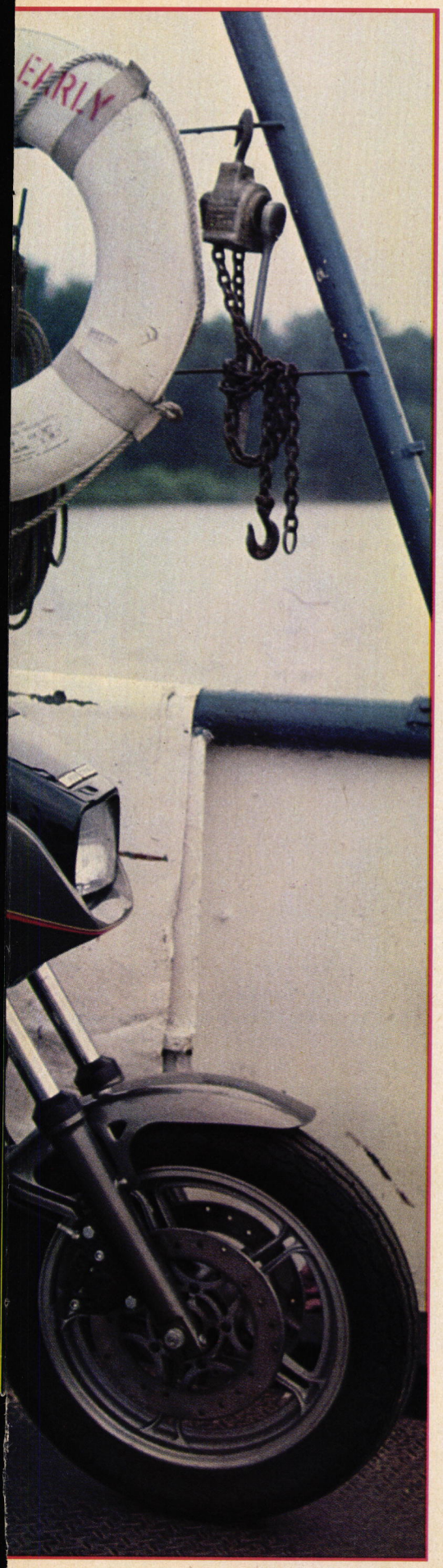
9 mg. "tar", 0.8 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.



Today's Camel Lights, unexpectedly mild.

MOTO GUZZI
850-T5



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 TOM RILES

RIDING IMPRESSION:

Moto Guzzi 850-T5

Smaller wheels and bigger tires for a non-generic GT.

BY STEVE THOMPSON

The promise of the Moto Guzzi T5 is tantalizing: Its specifications suggest a nearly ideal blend of riding comfort, no-fuss power, respectable speed and razor-sharp handling. Riders familiar with Europe will recognize such traits as those of a good GT bike, and the evolution of the Guzzi T-lineup to the current T5 will seem both logical and inevitable.

That evolution involved far more than a facelift, though the T5 *was* restyled from its predecessor. More important, however, the T5 marks Moto Guzzi's first use of 16-inch front and rear wheels on a production bike. Equipped as such, the bike is unique; that much is obvious even on paper. But as 750 miles of riding the first T5 in the country showed, "unique" and "successful" aren't necessarily synonymous.

Every manufacturer builds motorcycles whose *raisons d'etre* seem clearest to the home market, and understanding the T5 was easiest for me when I recalled that the factory lies in Mandello del Lario, a little town bordering Lake Como in the Italian Alps. Having visited the factory only two months before I got the T5 from Moto Guzzi North America, I still remember the area vividly.

The two-lane road along the lake is coiled and slippery, a flat version of the roads that snake up and down the local hills. These roads demand superb transient response, fade-free and powerful brakes and plenty of grunt without too much poking at the gear lever. A fast rider here does not rocket up to a hairpin and grab all the brakes he can while screaming the engine through four downshifts; such antics will exhaust him and his bike too soon. And because the roads aren't simply playroads but the main thoroughfares to anywhere, getting tired means getting there late. So the fast riders—not the café racers, but the GT riders—strive for smoothness at speed.

Vital elements of the T5 all speak of an attempt to meet the demands of such riding. The 16-inch wheels are logical, since they reduce effort in flick maneuvers. The new 38mm-diameter tubes for the air-assist fork resist flex better than the old 35mm tubes. As is the Le Mans III (September 1984 issue), the T5 is equipped with Moto Guzzi's Integral Braking System, in which the rear brake pedal actuates the front left disc and the rear disc, while the front-brake lever works the front right disc. The T5 also shares its frame with the Le Mans, but its air-assisted Paioli shocks provide 0.2-inch less travel.

Basic powertrain components also are shared with the Le Mans, although the T5's air-cooled shaft-drive vee-twin motor has been tuned for torque rather than horsepower. The T5 produces a claimed 67 horsepower and 55 foot-pounds of torque, nine hp less than the Le Mans III and one foot-pound more torque; but more important, both the T's power and torque peaks occur at engine speeds well below those of the Le Mans. More telling, perhaps, are comparisons with the previous T-series model, the T4, whose old-style "round-barrel" engine was claimed to produce only 58 hp and 50 foot-pounds of torque.

Like the Le Mans III, the T5 received extensive motor work, including Nigusil cylinder-coating process, ports and valves larger than the T4's, and new pistons, which give the engine a compression ratio of 9.5:1 (compared to the Le Mans' 9.8:1)—and also requiring 97-octane fuel for optimum performance. Moto Guzzi national sales manager John Ellis says American T5s will be close to Euro-spec performance, despite EPA requirements,

Continued

because they'll use new 30mm pumper carbs rather than the Euro-model's square-slide Dell'Ortos.

In a reversal of the usual Europe-to-America translation, the change might help the bike. As it stands, the Euro-T5 is sluggish, its engine responding slowly, with considerable flywheel effect. It differs dramatically from the Le Mans III, which, comparatively speaking, rockets away with the slightest touch of throttle. The accelerator pump in the Le Mans' VF Dell'Ortos probably accounts for much of the difference, cam and ignition timing the rest. Whatever the causes, the effects are out of phase with the T5's apparent mission; although the engine will chug along at 10 mph in top gear docilely, getting serious in the twisties emphasizes less desirable traditional Guzzi traits in the drivetrain, and sheds light on new traits generated by the small wheels.

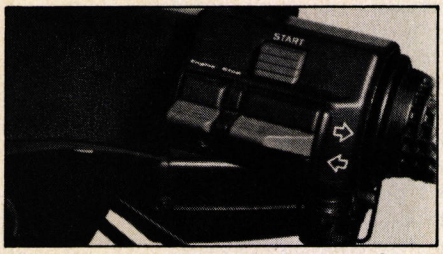
Most big Guzzis are reputed to suffer from notchy, slow gearchanges, and this T5 certainly did. To insure a clean upshift, preloading the pedal and powerful follow-through were *de rigueur*. The clutch added its own problems, requiring a considerable pull and sometimes delivering a grabby engagement. The overall effect was almost Harley-like: a slow-revving engine matched to a clunky gearbox and hefty clutch.

Guzzi's T5 is not a Low Rider, though, so the effects of the powertrain are doubly evident. And the wheels and steering geometry make the bike so sensitive to steering inputs that it verges on being "nervous." My first ride on the T5 was on 40 miles of Interstate, and the bike demanded so much attention to keep it on its line that I thought the steering-head bearings were undertorqued; subsequent inspection by a Moto Guzzi rep indicated they weren't, so I tried to adjust to the sensitive steering.

The bike's ergonomics did not help the process. Although the bike/rider interface is well within normal range, the thickly padded seat forced my legs to splay just where they wanted to grip the tank, and the headlight nacelle directed wind at my chest, keeping my helmet in an area of turbulence. Mitigating these problems was the low vibration level of the engine, which loafed along at 3400 rpm at 60 mph.

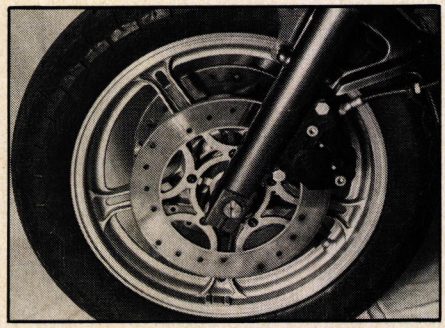
Turning off for the twisty bits brought new ergonomic difficulties. The T5 is the first Guzzi to get new handlebar switch boxes, and future Guzzi owners might wish it were the last. Like BMW, Moto Guzzi has its own ideas about how switches ought to work, and this year has redesigned everything. Only the turnsignals are genuinely hard to work, but they're infuriating. For starters, the switch is on the throttle side. And the shape of the switch requires pulling your thumb from under the twistgrip and awkwardly raising it to flip a paddle switch. Finally, a left turn is signaled by flipping the paddle down—exactly the opposite of the aborted BMW system of a few years back.

When I finally correctly signaled my way to roads that approximate the home turf of the bike, the bike was happier. The Pirelli Phantoms stuck tenaciously, wet or dry, and, unlike the Le Mans III, the T5 has more tire than lean available. Once locked onto a line, the bike held it well, the steering sensitivity nicely tuned to footpeg-grinding through tight turns. Fast sweepers were less confidence-inspiring as the chassis-jacking under shifting became more evident; sensitivity again was a problem on large bumps, and



Handlebar switches are uniquely arranged

And unusually difficult to use.



Guzzi T5 has 16-inch wheels front and rear

For handling that's almost too quick.

the front end easily was deflected from its line. Likewise, the rear end stepped out over big bumps at serious lean angles.

Fiddling with suspension adjustments allowed minor changes to the T5's behavior but could not alter the shortcomings, which all derive from the paradox of a sluggish powertrain mated to racer-quick steering. Simple fixes might exist for each problem (except the seat and switches): A steering damper could lessen the workload, and giving the T5's engine Le Mans III responsiveness would do the same. Removing the ABS-plastic nacelle under the "dashboard" and mounting a fairing might also help. But a rider confronting the expenditure of $4450 for a motorcycle requiring those fixes to be competitive might well ask himself what the point would be.

For Guzzi lovers, or for those after the unusual, the point is obvious: The T5 is unique. But for those looking for a successful GT bike, the T5's uniqueness probably will not be enough. •

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Moto Guzzi 850-T5 — street

IMPORTER: Benelli/Moto Guzzi North America, 1501 Caton Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21227

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $4405

ENGINE

Type	four-stroke 90-degree transverse vee-twin
Valve arrangement	pushrod-operated overhead valves
Bore and stroke	83.0mm x 78.0mm
Displacement	844.2cc
Compression ratio	9.5:1
Engine redline	7800 rpm
Carburetion	two 30mm Dell'Orto slide/needle
Air filter	disposable paper element
Lubrication	wet sump
Starting system	electric only
Ignition	battery; dual points and dual coils
Charging system	12-volt; 280-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 24-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive	helical gears; 1.235:1 ratio
Clutch	dry, multi-plate
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel drive	spiral-bevel gears; 4.714:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.000	11.644	N/A
II	1.389	8.086	N/A
III	1.048	6.101	N/A
IV	0.870	5.065	N/A
V	0.750	4.366	N/A

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front	Paioli air-spring, 38mm stanchion tube diameter/5.9 in. (149mm)
Rear	dual Paioli air-spring shocks, five-way adjustable spring preload/2.9 in. (74mm)

BRAKES

Front	dual double-action hydraulic calipers, 10.6-in. (270mm) disc diameter
Rear	double-action hydraulic caliper, 10.6-in. (270mm) disc diameter

TIRES

Front	110/90H16 Pirelli MT29 tubeless
Rear	130/90H16 Pirelli MT28 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight	485 lbs. (220.0kg)
Weight distribution	N/A
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR)	970 lbs. (440.0kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank)	448 lbs. (203kg)
Wheelbase	59.3 in. (1505mm)
Seat height	31.0 in. (787mm)
Handlebar width	27.0 in. (686mm)
Footpeg height	11.0 in. (279mm)
Ground clearance	7.0 in. (178mm)
Steering head angle	28.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	N/A
Frame	tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity	3.3 qt. (3.0*l*)
Fuel tank	steel, 6.1 gal. (23.0*l*)
Instrumentation	speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, voltmeter, clock

WARRANTY: 12 months, unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLORS: Le Mans Red or Dark Smokey Quartz

All specifications and performance data are the manufacturer's claims, not information compiled by the CYCLE GUIDE staff.

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Nady PMC-3 Motorcycle Intercom

Taking rider/passenger communication out of the Stone Age.

• On a bike at speed, motorcyclists haven't been able to improve much on primitive man's communication by means of an odd collection of grunts and crude hand signals, sad to say. A trip two-up usually takes both rider and passenger back down the evolutionary trail, and they end up having to converse on the same primitive level.

Nady System's PMC-3 Motorcycle Intercom can make such Neanderthal-like communication a permanent part of the Stone Age, though. The PMC-3 offers full-duplex operation—both users can converse simultaneously—and an FM radio with an adjustable voice-activated switchover (VOX) for alternating between intercom and FM use. The intercom/FM unit itself isn't much larger or heavier than a pack of king-size cigarettes, and gets its power from three AAA batteries (included). Suggested retail price for the PMC-3 is $79.95, available from your motorcycle dealer.

Also included in the bargain are a pair of headsets, and you can pick from three different styles: The MO, a one-piece speaker/microphone unit with a flexible boom, which fits inside a helmet; the MS, with an in-the-ear speaker and a separate boom/mike that attaches to the outside of a helmet via a suction cup or Velcro; and the MC, which consists of an in-the-ear speaker and a Velcro-attached mike for use with full-face helmets only. None of the headsets require permanent modification to a helmet, and each style is available separately for $13.25 each.

After trying all three styles of headsets, the MCs stood out as the favorites. They're the lightest of the bunch, the least obtrusive and the least affected by wind noise. In straight intercom mode, the PMC-3/MC combination offers excellent sound quality, and permits you to speak in normal tones, even at elevated speeds. Plus, all of the headsets let you hear your own voice, so you don't have to guess at whether or not you're being heard. The MC's button-size speaker doesn't fit every person's ears, though, and even a slight tug on the wire will pull the speaker loose. When that happens, you have to stop, take off your helmet and replace the speaker; an annoying proposition, at best.

Nady's other headsets function just as well as the MCs, if you're riding behind a fairing; then they transmit conversation with the same startling clarity. On an unfaired bike, though, wind noise interferes with the MS and MO headsets, especially the passenger's. Turbulence coming off the rider's helmet gets picked up by the passenger's mike, and makes his voice sound garbled.

And on an unfaired bike, wind noise renders the FM/intercom feature almost useless. Regardless of the VOX control's setting, wind roar at freeway speeds cuts out the FM, leaving you in intercom mode. Moreover, the PMC-3 rarely can hold a station for more than a few minutes, its signal separation is poor and there's no dial to indicate what station it's on.

Despite the FM radio's shortcomings, we're still enthusiastic about the PMC-3's performance as an intercom. With the right headsets, the Nady intercom allows rider and passenger to converse as easily as if they were in their own living room. And if you want to dispense with the FM feature entirely, Nady offers the PMC-2 intercom for $59.95. Either setup, though, brings rider/passenger communication into the present—where it belongs.

—Charles Everitt

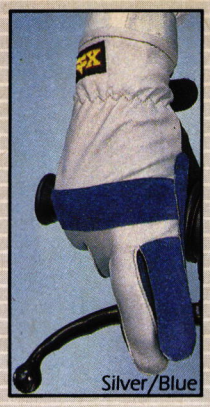
PMC-3 intercom offers high-quality sound, FM radio and a choice of three headset styles

And an electronic solution to the age-old problem of rider-to-passenger communication.

StreetPaws

A best buy! Fox StreetPaws look great and feel great. Made of soft leather with vented nylon finger side-panels. Double leather at wear points. Suede on finger cleans face shield. 4 colors as shown plus all Black.
Sizes: S,M,L,XL.
$19.95

Blue/Black


Silver/Blue

Fox RainSuit

Made of water-proofed nylon fabric with welded seams and velcro closing system. Waterproof front has bib, zipper & velcro flap.

Sizes: XS,S,M,L,XL. Yellow or Black.
$37.50

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SUPER STREET MORE FOR '84!

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Fully lined. Special sole. Velcro closed leather zipper cover. Double leather at wear points.
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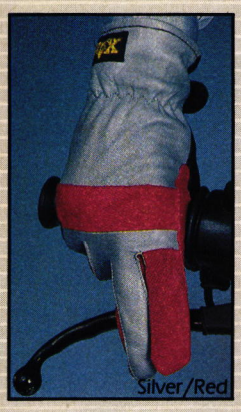
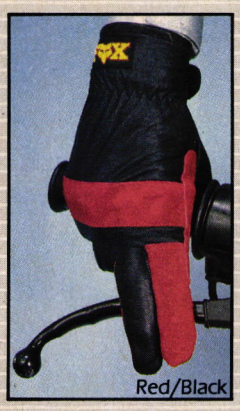
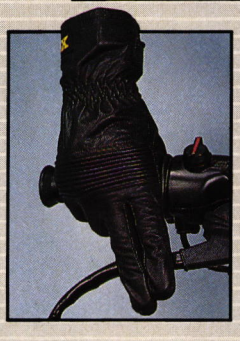
$85.00


Silver/Red


Red/Black

StreetPaws II An all-leather street glove with velcro wrist close. Accordian-pleat f-l-e-x panel at the knuckles for style & comfort. Classic black only. Unlined for summer use. Sizes: S,M,L,XL. **$22.50**



TrackPaws

All-leather plus plated metal rivets protect you when needed.
Colors: Red or Blue.

Sizes: XS,S,M,L,XL. **$29.00**

Metal rivets protect your palms.

Fox Factory Twin-Clicker Shock

You can own the same shock that dominated the 1983 AMA SuperBike National Championships.

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Suzuki GS-550 & GS-750.
Kawasaki GPz-550,750,1100 & Ninja
Yamaha FJ-600,1100; RD/RZ-350LC;
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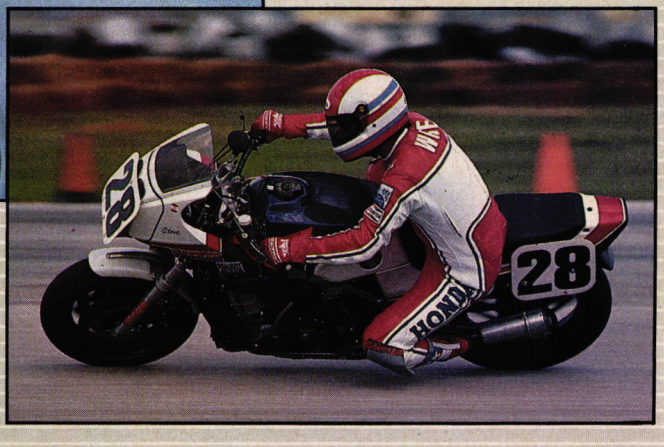
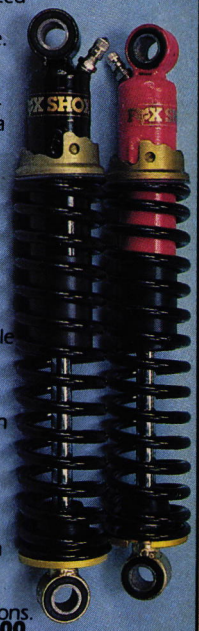


Fox Street Shox®

The best selling gas-pressurized shock available. Race winning performance in a rebuildable single-tube design. Choice of Black or Red bodies. Available for most popular models. Made in U.S.A. Order direct and we select optimum springs. Call for applications.
$144.00 including springs.



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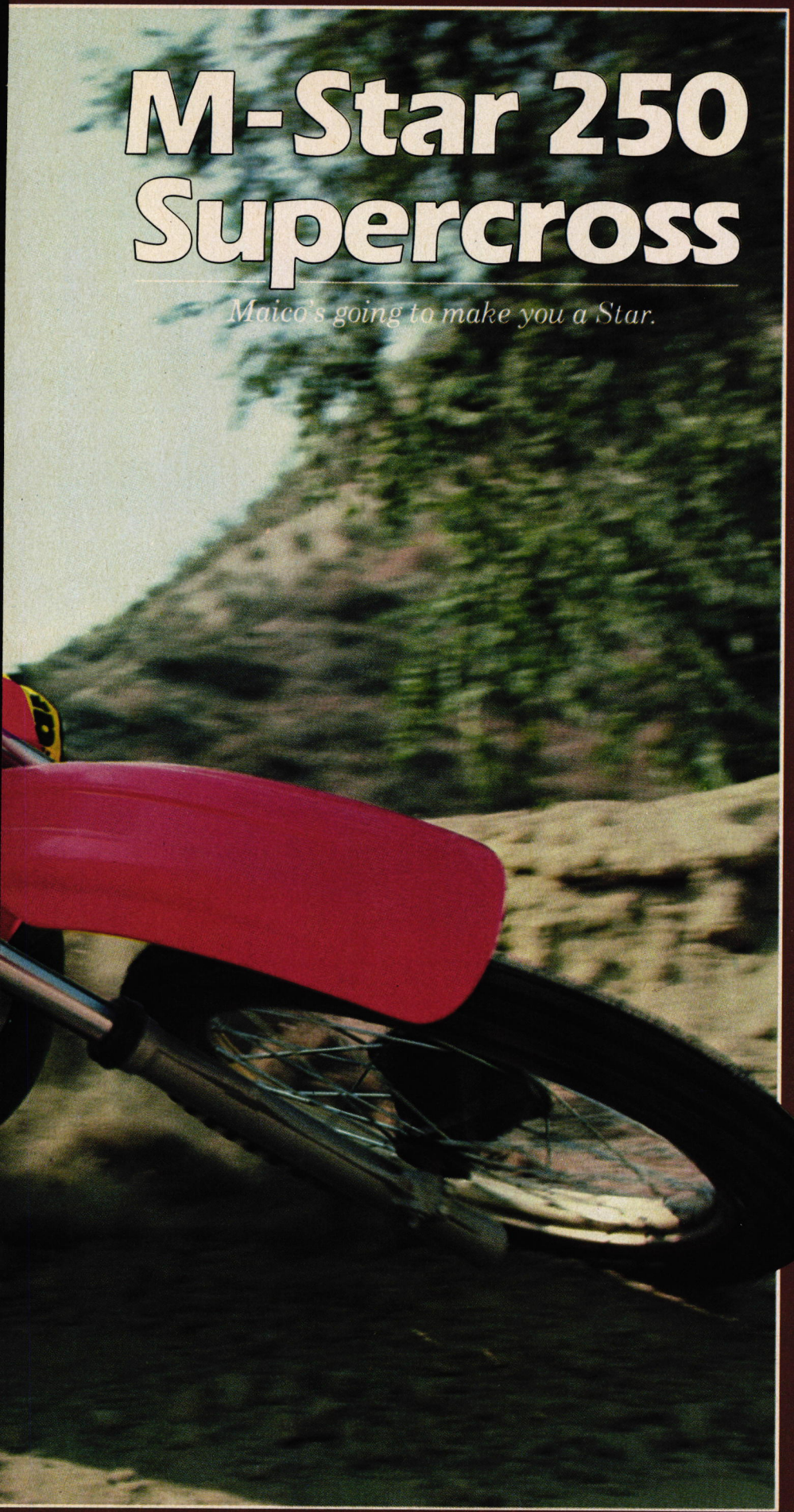
MOTOCROSS TEST:

M-Star 250 Supercross

Maico's going to make you a Star.



ACTION PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

BY DAVID DEWHURST

It's not impossible to beat Japanese motocross bikes. European bikes have done it before, but every year the technological gap between East and West seems to widen. And, while it's still not impossible for the smaller European manufacturers to catch up, they face an uphill struggle. As if the mechanical hurdles weren't high enough, one reborn European company is taking on that Japanese challenge with an additional handicap: a new name with no obvious reputation to back it up.

Despite its new name, M-Star is one of Europe's oldest manufacturers of motocross bikes. Under its far more familiar name of Maico, this small German concern pioneered such major breakthroughs in motocross as the early use of two-stroke engines and long-travel suspension. But engineering prowess alone couldn't keep Maico on top, and management problems finally resulted in bankruptcy last year. That's when the German government stepped in to rescue the plant with three of the original five Maisch family members still at the helm. The remaining two owned rights to the Maico name in the U.S. and, in a perfect example of the family squabbling that brought about many of the firm's problems, refused to allow the name to be used on this side of the Atlantic. So in the U.S. market, Maicos are now M-Stars.

Out of this upheaval has emerged a company more determined than ever to succeed. M-Star is trying to regain some of the ground lost to the Japanese, with a new bike that, beneath its unfamiliar decals, retains all the better technical tricks Maico has learned over the years. The chassis retains the geometry that produced the traditional rock-steady Maico handling almost every other company has tried to copy. But the M-Star doesn't depend on tradition to be competitive. It includes up-to-the-minute features such as an expensive Ohlins shock connected by links to the swingarm. And, most important, an all-new liquid-cooled motor puts this bright red Bavarian in a head-to-head confrontation with everything the Japanese have to offer.

M-Star looks to have narrowed the technology gap between East and West. But looks can be deceptive. In a battle for 250-class supremacy, victory circle is the only place to find out whether the Germans have found the handling and horsepower to make the M-Star really shine.

Continued

TECH INSPECTION:

ENGINE

A lot more than the name was changed when Maico built a new 250 for America. Some pieces were retained from the 1983 Maico 250 Spider's air-cooled motor, but the majority of parts—all the way from the liquid-cooled cylinder barrel and head right down to the revised gear ratios—are new.

A liquid-cooled cylinder is the single largest change to the new M-Star. Considered essential to both sales and performance, the new barrel allowed Maico to boost the output over the old air-cooler and still improve reliability. Combustion-chamber volume has not been changed, and the 12.0:1 compression ratio carries over from last year's Spider, but the squish band is now shallower in an attempt to improve combustion.

Inside the cast-iron liner, porting has not been altered dramatically. In fact, the large bridged exhaust and four transfer ports are identical to those in the '83 Spider. It's the intake port that came in for change. Port height was raised from 56mm to 59mm, while width at the top was reduced by 1mm, to 21mm. Extra area was also added to the boost port, which M-Star claims gives the new motor a healthy improvement in intake flow. To complement the larger boost port, more-flexible reed petals were incorporated just downstream of the M-Star's 38mm Bing carburetor.

Although carburetor size is the same as on last year's Spider, jetting has been altered to suit the revised porting and new exhaust system. Looking like something from a factory racer, the hand-rolled and -welded Italian Fresco pipe is unpainted. The loop under the right side of the gas tank sticks out farther than did last year's stamped pipe, but the new shape gets much of the credit for the claimed horsepower increase.

The M-Star transmits that power through a crankshaft that's essentially unchanged from the '83 Spider's crank. The only difference between them is the direct drive added for the all-plastic water pump, which bolts to the outside of the primary-drive case. The pump moves coolant in through the back of the cylinder and out through the head. From there, the coolant passes through two downtube-mounted radiators. Each radiator is a lightweight design, with an aluminum core and plastic top and bottom sections.

DRIVETRAIN

Last year Maico finally stopped using a stack of cupped washers as the single main spring for the clutch. The conventional coil springs used in '83 were a welcome change, but the springs were too weak to take the strain. The new 250 now uses the heavier coil springs found in the 500's clutch. And for those who abuse the five aluminum clutch plates into submission, M-Star offers a set of steel plates as an accessory for the 250.

To further strengthen the powertrain, Maico redesigned the gearbox internals. All gears are machined from stronger steel, and now have five engagement dogs instead of the three used on the '83 Spider. One shift fork was also lengthened to improve shifting, and the shift drum also came in for minor changes. Third- through fifth-gear ratios are unchanged, although first- and second-gear ratios are taller (numerically lower) than in 1983.

CHASSIS

Frame: The M-Star's basic chassis is the same single-front-downtube design used last year. The steel swingarm feaures additional gusseting around the pivot point for extra strength. Last year's red frame paint is replaced by silver.

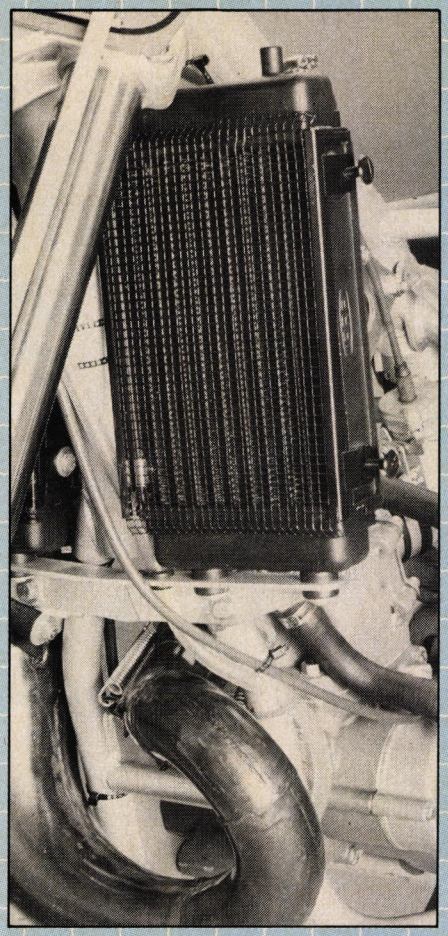
Wheels: Unlike most other motocross bikes on the market, the M-Star still uses a small single-leading-shoe front brake, which this year is laced to an Italian Borrani rim rather than last year's Nordisk rim. The rear wheel has a similar rim change and both wheels now are shod with Metzeler Perfect Cross soft-terrain tires, rather than the Pirellis used on the Spider.

Front Suspension: Maico's own fork has a heavier 21-pound spring (versus 19 pounds in 1983). Nothing else is changed, except for the removal of the Maico logo from the sliders and a coat of silver paint rather than red.

Rear Suspension: A single Ohlins shock and an unchanged linkage system provide a rising-rate rear end. U.S. models are being delivered with what Ohlins-importer Steve Simons describes as a "European" shock, with more compression damping and a 4mm-shorter eye-to-eye length than U.S.-spec shocks. If your shock is stamped MA3421 just around the top shock eye you might want to try changing it to a U.S.-spec unit with the help of M-Star or Ohlins.

DETAILS:

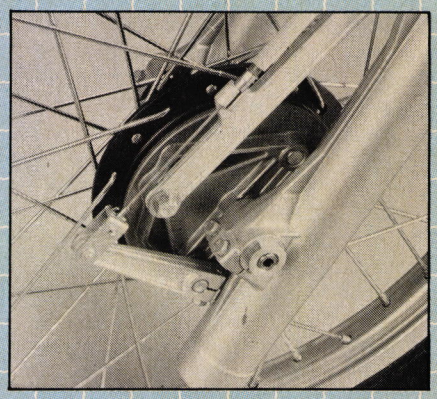
A new aluminum chain guide replaces last year's plastic unit. The Magura throttle is now plastic, and is a half-turn (rather than three-quarter) stop to stop. Grips are now softer, and the plastic sidepanels, tank and air scoops are also new. The reshaped tank also sits lower in the frame and a new seat extends farther forward. A new molded-plastic mud flap gives more protection to the shock.



Aluminum/plastic radiator bolts to frame

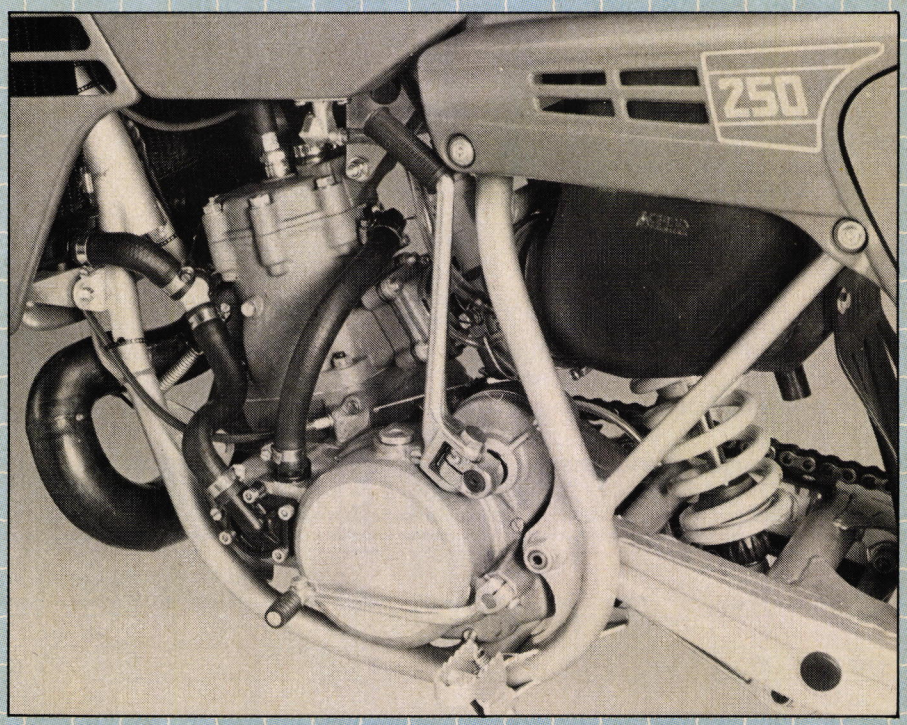
Keeping horsepower up and weight down.

M-Star 250 Replacement Parts	
Piston	$104.02
Ring	$28.97
Cylinder	$429.02
Fiber Clutch Plate (6 required)	$8.30
Aluminum Clutch Plate (5 required)	$5.51
Rear Sprocket	$43.53
Front Sprocket	$14.17
Air Filter	$15.70
Front Brake Shoe (2 required)	$10.46
Rear Brake Shoe (2 required)	$16.43
Clutch Cable	$7.81
Throttle Cable	$8.62
Brake Cable	$8.14
Brake Lever	$11.57
Clutch Lever	$11.57
Rear Brake Pedal	$17.80
Shift Lever	$21.61
Optional Fork Spring (2 required)	$19.18



M-Star's drum front brake looks obsolete

But provides up-to-date performance.



M-Star's 250 has the horsepower to hold its own against Japanese machinery

A high-revving European rocketship bred for American motocross tracks.

DETAIL PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 GILBERT LUNA

Continued

Will It Win?

• Maico never had much of a reputation for building fast 250s. The company was famous for its Open-classers, but never really tried to go head to head with the competition in a class the Japanese virtually owned. But a change of name also seems to have brought with it a change in outlook. And if the new 250 M-Star is any indication, the German firm now wants to be known for its 250s, too.

It didn't take a total redesign to bring about that dramatic change; in fact, the M-Star is quite similar to the '83 Maico 250 Spider in all but one important area: the motor. A brand-new motor was all the company needed, though, to bring its fine-handling bike up to speed in a class that lives by horsepower.

And one thing the new M-Star has is plenty of horsepower. Once the motor is spinning about three-quarters of the way up its rev range, it has enough power to roost dirt on anything in the quarter-liter class; it's a horsepower rocket. It's also a top-end motor that RM250 owners can easily identify with. Like the Suzuki, the liquid-cooled M-Star needs to be revved hard to make full use of its power potential. Let the revs drop and you'll find yourself struggling to cope with the mediocre mid-range and low-end power that will leave you eating everyone else's dirt.

Despite its soft mid-range and a preference for revving, the M-Star can't be classified as being pipey. Thanks to the right amount of flywheel mass and an equally well-suited ignition-advance curve, the German motor is very easy to use. There is an obvious rush when it hits the powerband, but the motor never screams into a wheel-spinning frenzy like some highly tuned 125s. The M-Star is a controllable revver that's easy to like.

But controllability isn't everything on a racetrack. The lack of mid-range hurts lap times on tight tracks, where the M-Star won't rocket out of slower turns as fast as some bikes, such as Yamaha's YZ250. And while clutch-fanning helps, it also points out the M-Star's oversprung clutch, which needs a gorilla-style grip to get results. Unlike a typical Japanese motocross bike's two-finger operation, the M-Star clutch feels like a Nautilus hand exerciser. Careful filing of the operating cam is claimed to improve the action, but be prepared for a workout, just the same.

The suspension gave us quite a workout at first, too, until we discovered that a European-spec shock (stamped MA3421 on the top shock eye) had been installed in place of the U.S. version (MA340). The Euro shock is 4mm shorter eye to eye, and has more compression damping than the U.S. version. With the Euro-spec shock, the M-Star squats badly under acceleration and pushes the front end in turns, and no combination of preload and damping adjustments effects a cure. The answer came in a $45.00 rebuild by Ohlins importer Steve Simons. With less compression damping and an extra 4mm of shock travel, the bike's tendency to squat under acceleration disappears. The bike also doesn't feel nearly as stiff on choppy straights, thanks

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Wheel Travel, Front/Rear, in.	Weight (fuel tank empty), lb.	Weight bias, Front Rear, percent	Steering head angle/ Trail, degrees/inches	Transmission, number of speeds
M-Star 250–'84	11.7/12.7	230	48.3/51.7	27.0/4.72	5
Cagiva WMX 250–'84	11.9/12.7	221	49.8/50.2	28.0/4.65	6
Honda CR250R–'84	11.7/12.2	216	48.4/51.6	26.7/4.13	5
Kawasaki KX250–'84	11.6/12.3	220	48.2/51.8	28.5/4.65	5
Suzuki RM250–'84	11.8/12.9	220	47.9/52.1	27.8/4.41	5
Yamaha YZ250–'84	11.3/12.6	214	48.4/51.6	28.0/4.69	5

to the reduced compression damping. With spring set length adjusted to 243mm and the damping adjuster seven clicks in from its softest setting, the M-Star's rear suspension feels as plush as anything on the racetrack.

The same can't be said for M-Star's own front fork. Like a number of Maicos we have tested in the past, the new M-Star's fork binds as the sliders move away from full extension. This binding makes the front end feel harsh over smaller bumps and also reduces the front-end's ability to compress under braking. This in turn makes the M-Star steer more slowly than its designers probably intended. After our testing, M-Star claimed the problem was caused by a too-short front-wheel spacer, which forced the fork legs together and caused them to bind. We had no opportunity to ride a corrected bike, but during the test we raised the stanchion tubes 13mm up through the triple clamps, which considerably improved the steering. But smoother fork action would probably make this change unnecesary.

It's a tribute to the M-Star's chassis that despite all those front-end problems, the bike still handles remarkably well. Like every Maico that preceded this new generation, the 250 is as stable as a Kenworth. Whether the M-Star is hauling down a straight or exiting a turn, it always feels rock-steady, and that's one of the bike's most endearing features. Unlike any other motocross bike we've ridden lately, the M-Star can be pitched around in turns like a flattracker. Even with its soft-terrain Metzeler tires clawing at concrete-hard adobe, the 250 steers predictably and allows the rider to exit turns with more throttle than seems prudent. The bike just sets up in a controllable slide and is *gone*, with no fishtailing or high-siding. The M-Star makes a clean getaway that leaves other 250s wallowing in its wake.

There aren't many places where the competition can make up ground on the M-Star, either. Despite the antiquated look of its single-leading-shoe front brake, the M-Star does a good job of slowing for turns. A disc brake might offer a little more power, but M-Star's simple design is quite adequate. The same could be said for the rear drum, which has gone unchanged on Maicos for years. Both brakes are controllable and strong enough for even the fastest riders.

With M-Star's, nee Maico's, newfound interest in the 250 class, quite a few of those faster riders might give this German blitzbike a try. They'll be young racers who probably haven't considered owning anything other than a Japanese 250, but once they try the M-Star, they'll realize there *is* a European alternative. And that alternative is more than just a choice for those who'd rather eat worms than buy a Japanese bike; once the M-Star is dialed in, it's a first-class MX weapon. What's important is that M-Star has gone a long way toward closing the technology gap between Europe and Japan. There are still a few problems that need ironing out, but M-Star has shown that it's not impossible to beat the Japanese. And that's a great way to start building a new reputation. •

Nits:

- Kickstart folds up at end of stroke.
- Exhaust pipe burns leg.
- Fuel line can be pulled off when grabbing kickstarter.

Picks:

- Motor starts easily.

Ride Review

• The M-Star 250 makes me feel like motorcycling's own Benedict Arnold. I'll stand around the garage, marveling at the bike and commenting on how the Japanese can still be taught a few things. I'll talk about how it's great that a choice still exists, and how start lines don't have to look like Japanese assembly lines. I'll even talk of the M-Star's heritage, and how Maico pioneered modern motocross in so many ways.

But when it comes to racing one, I'm a turncoat. What I really meant was it's great for *other* people to have a choice; that M-Stars can show up on the start line with *other* riders on them. All that stuff about the company's heritage and M-Star competing with the Japanese still is important to me, but not important enough to tolerate a pipey motor and a clutch lever that would turn Conan's left arm into mush after one lap. Sure, winning is quite possible on the M-Star, it's just a little more difficult. And winning already is difficult enough for me.

So it's fine with me if M-Stars start showing up at the track. In fact, I think it would be just fine if every rider on the line had an M-Star. But it would be even better if every rider *except me* had one. —*Ron Lawson*

• I have to admit that prejudice played a big part in my first impressions of the new M-Star. Like most motocrossers, I was brought up with Japanese machinery. I'd come to expect, without any real justification, that Japanese bikes simply were superior to anything Europe had to offer. I was wrong.

After riding the M-Star, I realized that no matter how good Japanese motocross machinery is today, this German 250 certainly isn't inferior. In handling, the M-Star shines brighter than just about any bike I've ridden, Japanese or European. The bike feels a little tall going into turns, but once it's set up it will go anywhere you point it. I especially like the way it powerslides out of turns and lunges onto the next straight.

Not everything is perfect, though. As I said, the bike feels a little tall in the saddle. I wasn't too happy with the sticky fork action, either, and my left arm still aches from working the stiffest clutch this side of a semi's.

Overall, though, the M-Star is definitely competitive with anything else in its class. It's got the high-rpm power to beat many Japanese bikes, and the handling to bury almost anything. In fact, if the factory found a little more low-end and smoothed out the fork, I might start getting prejudiced against Japanese bikes. —*Gary Denton*

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

M-Star 250 Supercross — motocross

IMPORTER: M-Star Motorcycles, 740 East Santa Maria Ave., Santa Paula, California 93060

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $2695

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement . . . . . one reed-valve controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one bridged exhaust
Bore and stroke . . . . . 67.0mm x 70.0mm
Displacement 246.8cc
Compression ratio (uncorrected) 12.0:1
Carburetion . . . . . one 38mm Bing slide/needle
Air filter . . . . . washable oiled foam element
Lubrication . . . . . pre-mixed fuel and oil
Starting system . . . . . primary kick
Ignition . . . . . internal-rotor-magneto CDI
Charging system . . . . . none

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 2.875:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Final drive . . . . . #520 O-ring chain (⅝-in. pitch, ¼-in. width); 3.714:1 (52/14) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	1.938	20.693	3.57
II	1.556	16.146	4.58
III	1.238	13.219	5.59
IV	1.043	11.137	6.64
V	0.880	9.396	7.87

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . Maico air-spring, 41.5mm stanchion tube diameter/11.7 in. (297mm)
Rear . . . . . single Ohlins shock, 45-position adjustable rebound damping, 34mm spring preload range/12.7 in. (323mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . drum, single-leading shoe
Rear . . . . . drum, single-leading shoe, rod operated

TIRES

Front . . . . . 90/90-21 Metzeler MXR 54M
Rear . . . . 120/90-18 Metzeler Perfect Cross Soft Terrain 65G

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

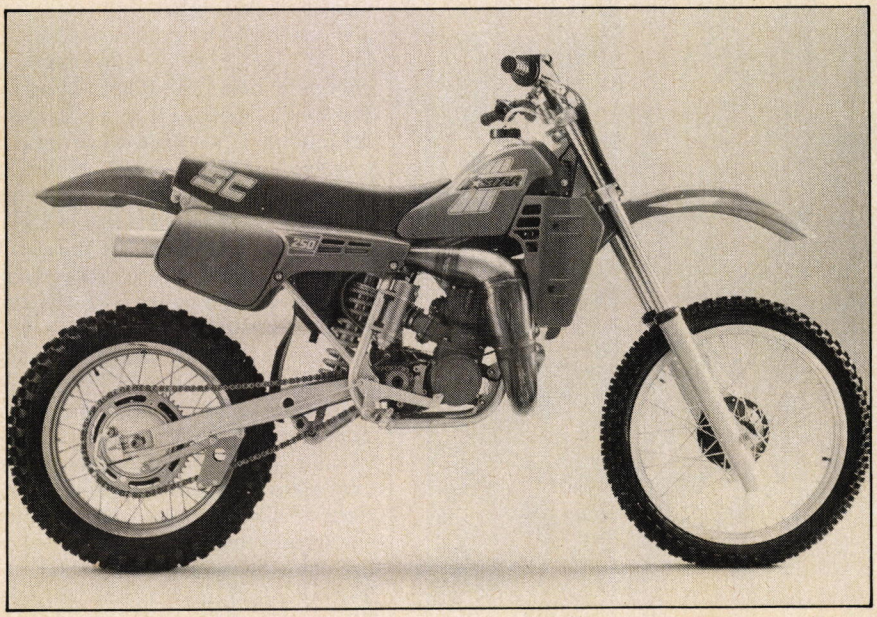
Weight . . . . . 230 lbs. (104.3kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 48.3% front, 51.7% rear
Wheelbase . . . . . 58.5 to 59.8 in. (1486 to 1518mm)
Seat height . . . . . 37.9 in. (962mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 32.6 in. (828mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 16.9 in. (429mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 14.3 in. (363mm), at engine cradle
Steering head angle . . . . . 27.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 4.72 in. (120mm)
Frame . . . . . tubular chromoly steel, single front downtube
Fuel tank . . . . . plastic, 2.2 gal. (8.5l), including 0.1 gal. (0.5l) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . none

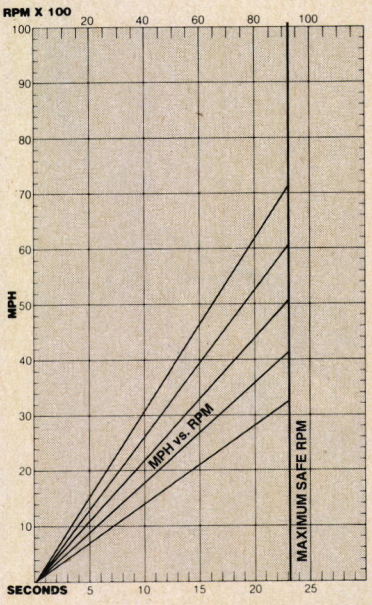
PERFORMANCE

Top speed (calculated) . . . . . 71 mph (114 km/h)

WARRANTY: none

AVAILABLE COLOR: red only





All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Dainese Cofi Leathers

Two-piece business suit from the Kenny Roberts' collection.

• Over the years, leathers for the American market generally have fallen into one of two categories: off-the-rack street wear or custom-made racing leathers. That situation is changing, however, in part due to Lino Dainese, an Italian designer. His products, imported by Motorace, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 861, Wilbraham, Massachusetts 01095, seem to be almost mandatory apparel for Americans racing in Europe: Kenny Roberts, Freddie Spencer, Wayne Rainey and Eddie Lawson all wear Dainese leathers. And, undoubtedly, the opportunity to wear the same brand of leathers that world champions wear accounts for a portion of Dainese's newfound popularity.

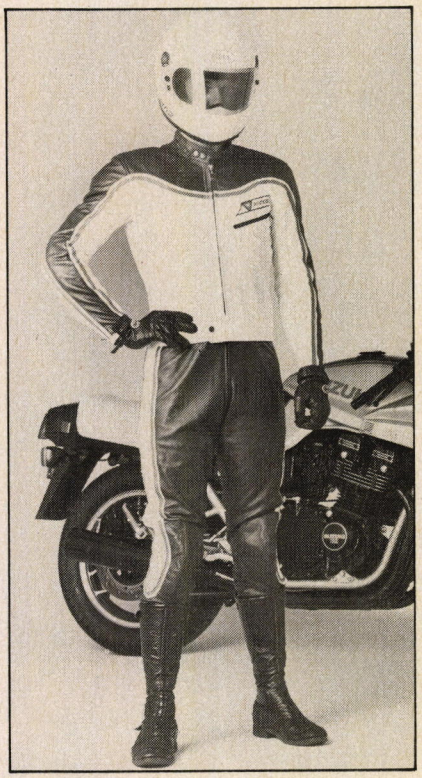
But another reason the company's leathers are being seen more often in this country is that they are off-the-rack leathers that offer the style and color of custom-made garments. Typical of Dainese's offerings is the two-piece Cofi suit. The Cofis are available in seven sizes, based on the rider's height, waist size and weight, and in four color combinations: red-and-black with white trim, blue-and-black with white trim, red-and-white with black trim, and blue-and-white with red trim.

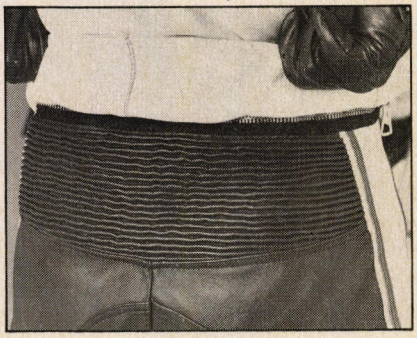
The Cofis are not only colorful, they're functional, too. Although the leather is somewhat thin, it is tough, and those areas most likely to touch down in a crash are either padded or double-layered—or both. The Cofis have padding at the shoulders, elbows, knees, and from the hips to mid-thigh. In addition, the knee and seat areas are double-layered. The pants and jacket zip together with a full-length, heavy-duty brass zipper at the waist, and an expandable section below the waist allows the back to stretch and prevents binding. Light-duty zippers at the cuffs of the pants and jacket permit the rider to tuck the cuffs into tight-fitting boots or gloves. There are no gussets behind the cuff zippers, but a snap holds each jacket cuff closed, allowing the zippers to be opened for additional ventilation.

That ventilation comes in handy, too, because the Cofi suit is *hot*. The suit has no other vents, and its nylon lining traps quite a bit of body heat. When the rider is moving, that heat buildup is less of a problem, but sitting in the pits or at roadside can turn the suit a personalized sauna in hot weather. Fortunately, the Cofi is a two-pice suit, so when others are walking around sweltering or with the upper half of their leathers tied clumsily around their waists, the Cofi's jacket can be removed for comfort. The two-piece design also makes the leathers easier to get in and out of, so when it comes time to take them off you don't have to stand around flailing your arms like a beekeeper with a hole in his suit. The jacket can be worn alone, too, although its short waist and the absence of an action back causes the jacket to ride up, despite its snug fit.

That fit is critical, too, because the Cofi pants and jacket are sold together in a single size, and can't be bought separately. What's more, with their $395 pricetag, these leathers are no cheaper than many custom-made suits. But for riders who have no problems with the sizing or the price, the Cofis do provide an alternative to custom-made leathers, as well as buy-them-today-and-wear-them-home convenience. That, and of course, the opportunity to dress like a champion.

—Jim Miller





Dainese Cofi's two-piece design makes the suit easy to put on or take off

And zippered/snapped cuffs make it livable in hot weather.

Linda Gail Jodi Sue

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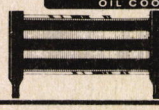

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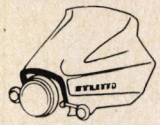

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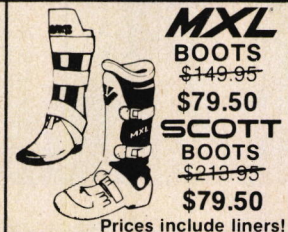

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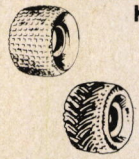

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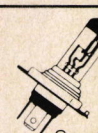

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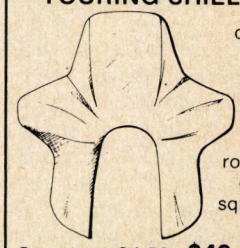

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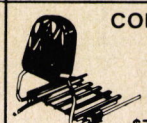

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DUAL-PURPOSE TEST:

Yamaha XT250

A city bike in country clothing.

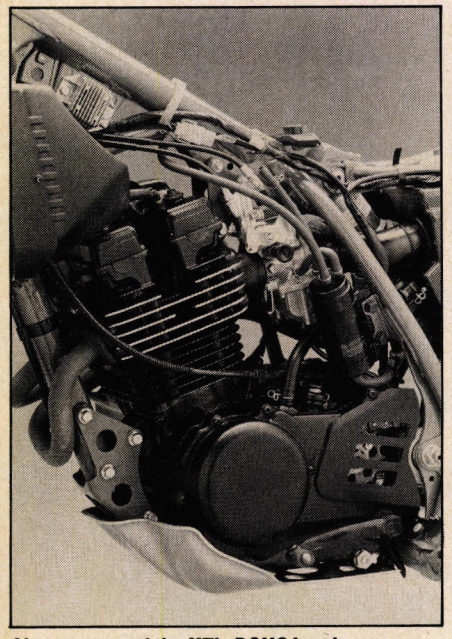
• Small bikes are gone, you say? Not so. Today's tiddlers wear dual-purpose drag and hide next to the dirtbikes in dealers' showrooms. And one of the best-disguised is Yamaha's XT250, which borrows its styling from the firm's motocross bikes, right down to the radiator-lookalike air scoops, long, narrow seat and ornamental number plates. Underneath the off-road exterior, though, is a high-tech four-stroke engine transplanted from a streetbike sold by Yamaha in Japan.

In fact, the XT's engine is second only to Kawasaki's KLR600 in setting new standards of complexity for single-cylinder motors. Along with a gear-driven counterbalancer, the XT has double overhead camshafts that push on four valves via a shim-and-bucket arrangement. Feeding the XT's sophisticated head is a siamesed pair of 22mm and 24mm carburetors which help give the 250 plenty of top-end power. The XT's tuning, however, doesn't offer much low-rpm grunt, and the resultant peaky powerband is more usable on the street than in the dirt.

© 1984 PATRICK BEHAR

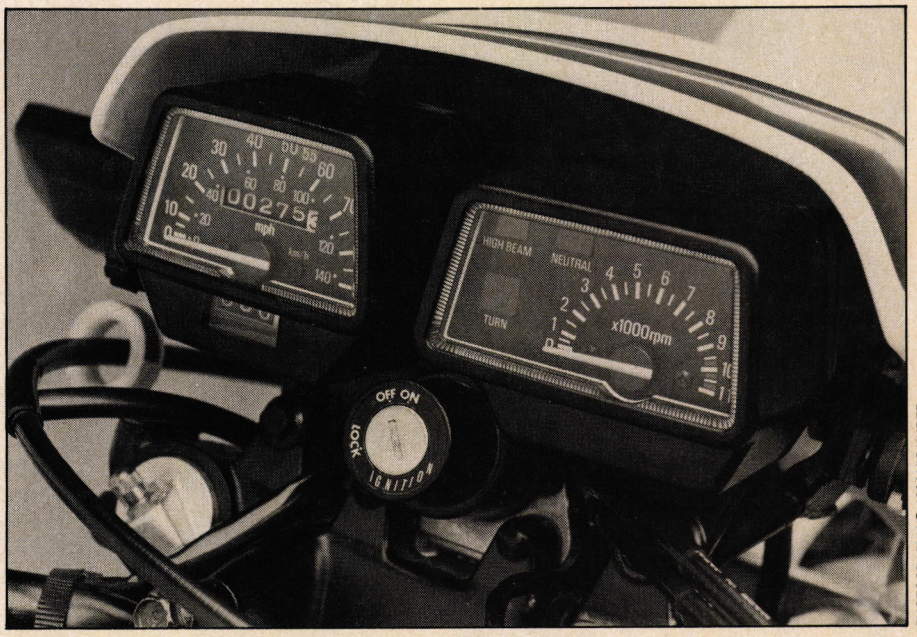
For instance, the XT stalls easily when lugging up a hill. At least, though, the bike is willing to start back up, thanks in part to the kickstarter-actuated compression release; a halfhearted kick is all it takes to fire up the quarter-liter motor. Although not as simple as pushing an electric-start button, the XT motor's easy starting is a boon for beginners and experts alike.

That docile engine bolts into a new chassis, which features Yamaha's second-generation Monocross rear suspension. Unfortunately, the bike's moderately long wheel-travel (9.7 inches in front and 7.9 inches in back) hurts the XT more than it helps it, because the resultant 34.3-inch



Air scoops cool the XT's DOHC head

And add a touch of motocross style.



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 VIC HUBER

XT250 instruments include a tachometer with a 9500-rpm redline

The streetbike influence is seen as well as felt on the Yamaha.

seat height can intimidate neophytes, especially those shorter than 5-foot-6. And despite its ample travel, the XT's suspension makes the bike feel out of place in the dirt. The same components that provide a wonderfully plush street ride are sprung too softly for serious dirt work.

Conversely, the XT's single-leading-shoe front brake seems far more suitable for dirt use than for the street, and sticks out like a stone-age wart on the XT's modern face. The brake fades after moderate applications, and even a whole-handed effort can't chirp the front tire on the pavement.

YAMAHA XT250L

Importer: Yamaha Motor Corp. USA
6555 Katella Ave.
Cypress, California 90630

Category	dual-purpose
Suggested retail price	$1799
Engine type	four-stroke vertical single
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	73.0mm x 59.6mm
Displacement	249.5cc
Compression ratio	9.5:1
Carburetion	one two-barrel Teikei Kikaki; 22mm slide/needle primary venturi, 24mm constant-vacuum secondary venturi
Gearbox	6-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Kayaba, 36mm stanchion tube diameter/ 9.7 in. (248mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	single Yamaha shock, 30mm spring preload range/ 7.9 in. (201mm)
Wheelbase	56.4 to 57.4 in. (1432 to 1458mm)
Seat height	34.3 in. (871mm)
Weight	266 lbs. (120.7kg)
Steering head angle	28.3 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.60 in. (117mm)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	15.826 sec., 78.74 mph (127 km/h)
Top Speed (observed)	81 mph (130 km/h)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	148 ft. (45.1m)
Fuel consumption	59 to 72 mpg (25 to 31 km/l)
Warranty	12 months
Available color	white only

Riding on the street also points out the XT250's abilities as a backroad mount. The XT can out-corner many streetbikes, because the tires stick far better than semi-knobbies have a right to, and the bike has virtually unlimited ground clearance that lets a skilled rider use all the tires' grip. And, back in town, the XT dissects city traffic with ease; its 266-pound weight makes the bike extremely agile, and its height gives the rider an excellent vantage point. On the highway, though, the Yamaha is less at home. The XT's motocross-style ergonomics put the rider into a Bob Hannah-slouch that strains his back, and the seat is too narrow to be comfortable for long.

But the XT is not quite as out of place on the Superslab as it is in the dirt; other 250 dual-purpose bikes will beat the XT in the backwoods. Yet what the XT lacks in trail savvy, it more than makes up for in streetwise smarts. In fact, Yamaha's breeding has made this bike an ideal urban assault vehicle. But that shouldn't be too surprising. After all, the XT250 is really just a streetbike in dirt drag. —*Paul Van Zuyle*

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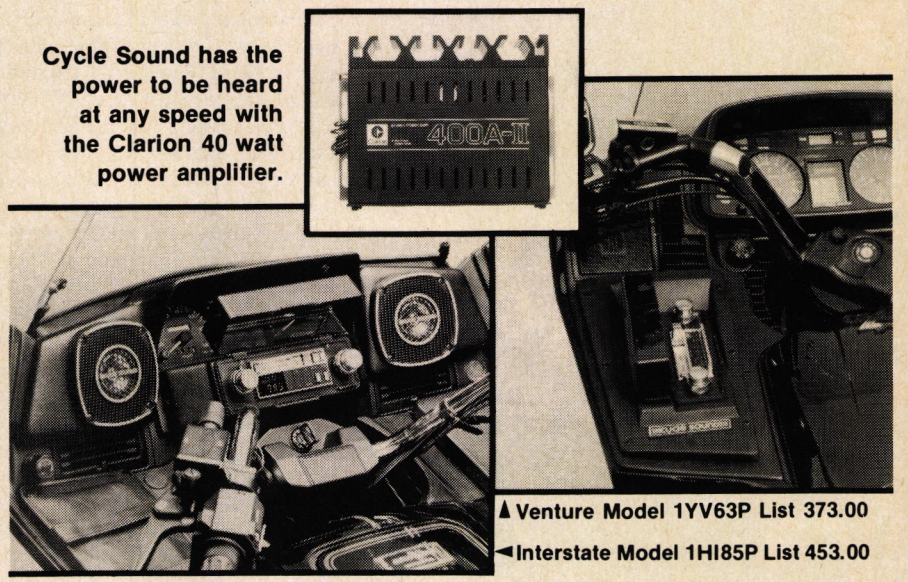

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Eclipse Sportpack Tankbag

Upwardly mobile soft luggage.

• Most of today's sportbikes are long on speed, handling and comfort, but short on carrying capacity. The simple addition of soft luggage can expand a sportbike's capabilities, though, making it more suitable for the long haul. And the Eclipse Sportpack Tankbag's expandable nature can do just that. What's more, the Eclipse bag has a decidedly European flavor. The bag expands vertically, has two main compartments, and its tall, narrow profile accommodates the low handlebars and racer's crouch riding positions that are common to today's sportbikes.

Supporting the lower half of the bag, and providing almost 60 percent of the claimed 1350-cubic-inch capacity, is a 10- by 16-inch compartment surrounded by a thin plastic stiffener. This section is nearly 7 inches tall, and can hold enough clothing for a weekend on the road. Two pouches sewn onto the outside of the lower section provide additional storage for spare maps, Snickers bars or the optional rain cover. True, the Sportpack is constructed of urethane-coated 1000-denier DuPont Cordura, but the bag is claimed to be only water-resistant, not watertight. A double-pull YKK zipper, concealed by rain flaps, closes this section on three sides.

While that construction isn't remarkably different from the typical tankbag, the Sportpack's expandable upper section certainly is. Snapped down, the top portion of the bag is scarcely 1-inch tall, but it expands to add another 5 vertical inches of storage. A full-length, double-zippered flap provides access to the top section, and a 7- by 12-inch section of nylon mesh on the underside of the flap offers even more small-item storage.

All the capacity in the world won't do you any good if the mounting system shortchanges you, though. So Eclipse endowed the Sportpack with the firm's standard three-point mounting harness. The Eclipse system allows simple, easy installation and removal, and the harness doesn't detract from a bike's appearance. But while Eclipse's harness provides a secure mount for the firm's other bags, it doesn't for the Sportpack. A fast ride on a Suzuki GS550ES had the Sportpack doing a constant side-to-side rumba, even with the mounting straps pulled tight enough to bind the plastic buckles. That condition is not solely the fault of the mounting system, though. The Sportpack is very tall when fully loaded—so tall, in fact, that the Suzuki's instruments were completely obscured—and almost any harness would have trouble keeping it in check.

Mounting system aside, then, Eclipse's Sportpack amounts to a well-thought-out, high-quality—and high-capacity—tankbag. The expandability gives the rider the option of packing light or loading up for the long haul. More important, though, the Sportpack can make a sportbike a more versatile machine, something that can allow the rider to expand his own horizons. The Sportpack retails for $99.50, and is available in gray with black trim or red with gray trim, from motorcycle dealers or directly from Eclipse Inc., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 7370, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107.

—Marc Cook

Eclipse's Sportpack towers above the modern sportbike

And fully loaded, it teeters, too.

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SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Racecourses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

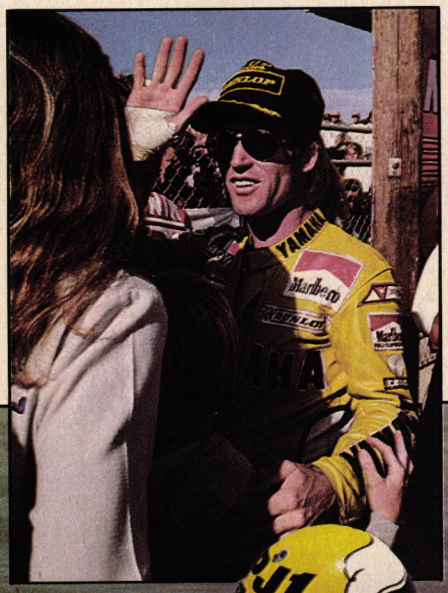
Farewell, Kenny Roberts

• Kenny Roberts never has been accused of being shy and retiring. Outspoken, perhaps, and incredibly fast, certainly, but never shy. This year, though, the question of Roberts' *retiring* has been a topic of popular discussion. And the question has been: When—exactly—will he pack it in?

Roberts' retirement was frequently brought up in the Laguna Seca pits last July, too. And for three days before the race, he managed to dodge the question—or fudge an answer. In response to one question about his retirement, Roberts said Laguna Seca "will *probably* be my last race." But "probably" has never been a part of Roberts' vocabulary. There was never any hint of doubt with Roberts, no matter what the situation, on or off the track.

And on the track at Laguna, Roberts again displayed his mastery of roadracing. He won both heats going away, leading as he pleased, and popping long, high wheelies for the crowd. Laguna Seca was AMA Grand National win number 34 for him, and as he told the 50,000-plus crowd after the race, it was his final win.

This is it.



Roberts' reign was finished. But beyond the trophy, or even the prize money awarded him that day, KR won something that few other racers ever do: the unqualified admiration of his peers and fans. Before Roberts even removed his helmet in victory circle, the crowd was chanting "Long live the king, long live the king." And after it was all over, the king stepped down from the throne and retired. But everyone knew that Roberts was still the king, and would always be the king.

It had taken Kenny Roberts a long time to retire officially. His first formal announcement was made one week before Christmas in 1983. Even then, few believed he would retire once and for all. And the announcement was carefully phrased: He said he was retiring from *Grand Prix* racing, not motorcycle racing. Sure enough, the following March, King Kenny held court at Daytona, and won his third 200. He

Continued

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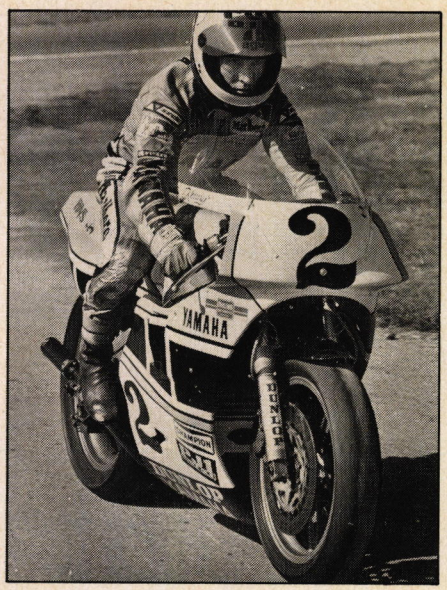

Roberts' final ride into victory circle

The look of a champ—and a gunfighter.

matched that with a win in Italy, taking home the gold in the Imola 200. Then finally, after a win in the Anglo-American Match Series, Roberts temporarily signed out as a racer. His next—and, as it turned out—final stop was the AMA roadrace at Laguna Seca in mid-July.

Roberts didn't qualify his statements after Laguna Seca, though; there was no if, probably or maybe. "I won the last GP I was in," said Roberts after Laguna, "and it feels good to win my last race." Those words echoed through the press room that day; Laguna Seca *was* to be his final motoreycle race. The man who tamed the TZ750-based flattrack racer, who won the 500cc World Championship his first year in Europe, who, it seemed, was ageless when it came to racing on two wheels, had retired.

But the real beauty of Roberts' final race—his final win—was that he did it with such style. To the untrained eye, it looked like any other race in which King Kenny reigned. He was in complete control, even

Heir Apparent

• Even though Kenny Roberts commanded the limelight at Laguna Seca, people didn't forget Randy Mamola, the man who finished second. And for good reason, too: Mamola put on quite a show, especially in the first heat, when he was swapping the lead with Roberts and pulling wheelies out of almost every corner on the track.

Mamola traditionally has been a crowd-pleaser at Laguna Seca, where he and Roberts have traded wins the past four years. But based on those last four times the two have faced off at Laguna, the 1984 race belonged to Roberts. And Roberts certainly seemed to have the inside track in this year's race, because his Yamaha OW70 appeared to have more power than Mamola's 1983-based Honda NS500 triple. Sure enough, Roberts won the first heat, with Mamola finishing second, and just before the green flag dropped to start the second, he leaned over and shouted—half-jokingly—into Mamola's helmet, "Let's just keep it the same."

Mamola obliged—unwillingly, of course—and King Kenny retired a winner. But the bipartisan Laguna Seca crowd didn't ignore Mamola. After they chanted, "Long live the king," to Roberts, their chorus changed to "Randy, Randy, Randy."

And with Roberts' retirement, the speculation now turns to who will reign in roadracing. Many favor Freddie Spencer or Eddie Lawson, but no one is counting Mamola out. The consensus, though, is that Mamola will be King of Monterey, if not the world. After all, he is the only man to have defeated King Kenny in California since 1981.

—Dain Gingerelli

Randy Mamola has yet to prove that he owns the world

But he has equal shares in Laguna Seca property with King Kenny.

Continued

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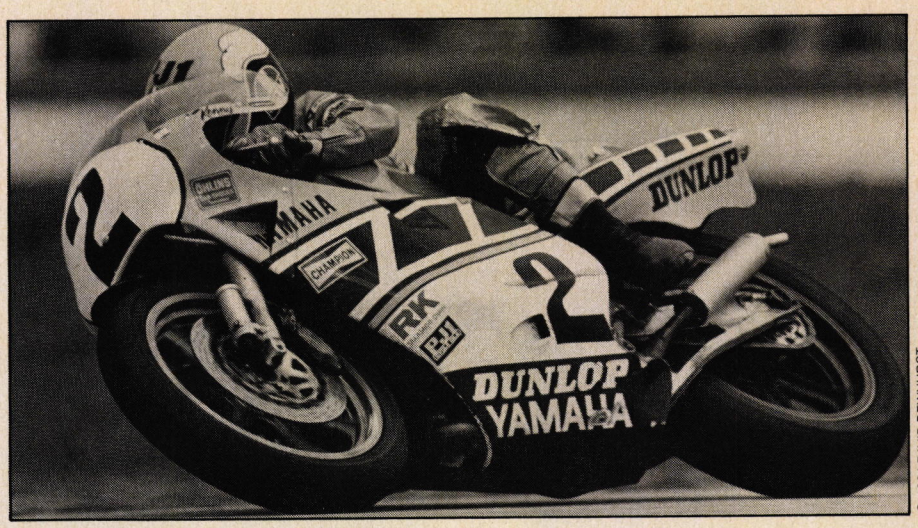

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King Kenny Roberts, doing what he did best

Take a long look, because you'll never see him racing this hardware again.

after Honda's Mike Baldwin accidently bumped the exhaust pipe on Robert's Yamaha, bending it outward and almost dropping both riders in the Corkscrew on Lap Two of the second heat.

Roberts described the scene after the race: "I felt a thud at the top of the hill, then the bike wanting to go sideways," he said. He evaluated the damage while exiting Turn Nine onto the front straight, and with the coolness of a man who has dealt with problems at speed before, made the fix while traveling 120 miles per hour between apexes. "I rebent it," he said, "in between turns Two and Three, giving it a series of frantic kicks." A few laps later, Roberts reeled in race-leader Mamola, and went on to win, in the process turning record lap times in the 1:05 range."One-oh-five-something?" Roberts asked after the race. "No wonder I'm so tired."

Afterward, he left one final clue that he really had abdicated his throne: While answering questions in the press room after the race, he asked for something cold to drink. Someone near the press cooler said all that was left was beer. Roberts replied, "Yeah, why not? I'm retired."

Then he smiled devilishly. Probably the same smile he wore everytime he passed someone on the racetrack. But it's a smile we'll probably never see again under those circumstances, because if all indicators are correct, Kenny Roberts, the greatest motorcycle racer ever, has retired.

—*Dain Gingerelli*

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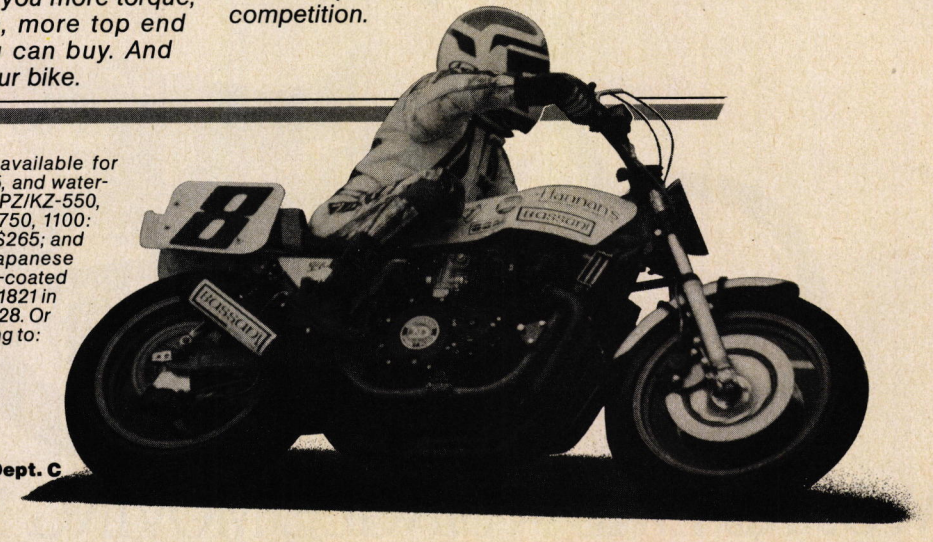

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Dinosaur TT Scrambles

Four-stroke fossils come alive.

A Fifties-vintage bike in a 1984 race

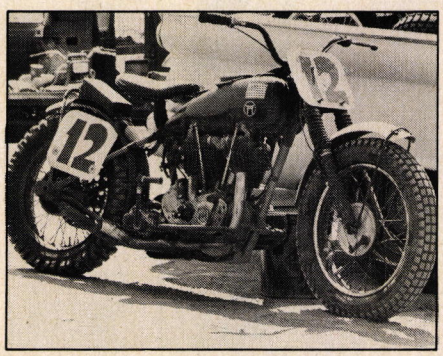
Yes, Virginia, they rode sideways in the old days, too.

• Not many young racers today realize that, once upon a time, there was no motocross racing as we know it today. And what's more, four-stroke engines ruled in practically all forms of off-road racing.

That wasn't very long ago, either. In fact, TT scrambles was the predecessor of present-day motocross. And although motocross has changed considerably from those origins, scrambles racing is run much the same as it was: over a course that includes small hills and berms, mixed with at least one flattrack-style turn, so the riders can broadslide their *four-stroke-powered* motorcycles.

Eventually, though, motocross went off in its own direction, and the knobby-tire sport blossomed in America, while TT scrambles withered. Worse yet (if you ask some of the early-day TT racers), the four-stroke engine got nudged out of the picture, lost in a cloud of two-stroke exhaust smoke. TT scrambles did manage to stay afloat in the AMA's Class C racing, but as any old-time TT scrambles racer will attest, it just isn't the same as it was in the old days.

Then, in 1974, a motorcycle club in Southern California, the Dirt Diggers, decided to revive the TT scrambles-style racing of the Fifties and Sixties. The idea was to provide a place for four-stroke TT bikes to race, the way it was before motocross took over and four-strokes became obsolete. They selected Perris Raceway, a site where many early-day TT specialists learned their trade, for the first Dinosaur TT scrambles.



There's nothing like a side-valver

Not to mention its seat-post suspension.

The program was kept low-key, and anyone with a four-stroke motorcycle could enter.

"The Dinosaur," said Dirt Diggers president Red Warland, "was originally a fun race, intended to give people with *old* four-stroke dirtbikes a chance to race them competitively against each other." By "old," Warland was referring to bikes such as BSA Gold Stars, Matchless G50s, Triumph twins, and even Harley-Davidson KR models.

So, for one day per year, two-strokes are considered extinct, at least at Perris Raceway. What's more, no one at the Dinosaur is heartbroken about the two-stroke's temporary demise. In fact, if anyone at the track so much as uses a ringy-dingy as a pit bike during Dinosaur Day, a chorus of boos and jeers from the other riders will drown the raspy-sounding engine until it is shut off.

Continued

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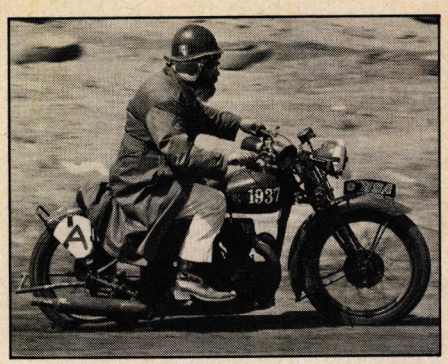
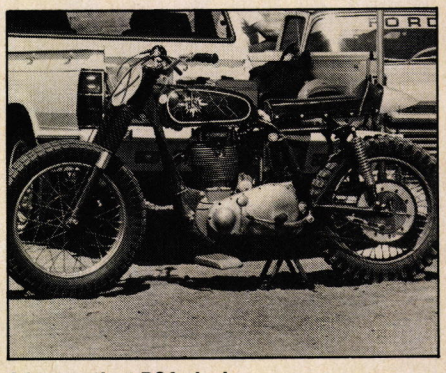


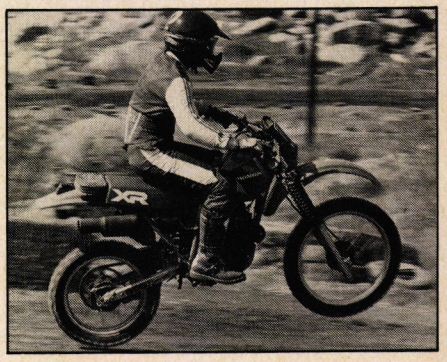
An ex-Army rig finds new action

Chasing the Big One that got away.



A long-extinct BSA single

Just another Beezer geezer.



An XR200R Honda mingles with the dinosaurs

Evidence that valves are ageless.

Don't get the impression that the Dinosaur riders are anti-technology, though. The resurgence of four-stroke off-road bikes in this country happened to coincide with the growth of the Dinosaur, and now, most of the racing hardware consists of Yamaha TTs, Honda XRs and Suzuki DRs.

But Warland and the rest of the Dirt Diggers don't mind that the orginal concept of the Dinosaur has been lost. "All we really want," said Warland, "is to let the four-strokes race and be competitive."

And it's that rejuvenated spirit of the four-stroke that has made the Dinosaur TT Scrambles one of the most popular events on the off-road calendar. As one Dinosaur rider said, "I just come here to have a little fun. And I don't have to breathe any of that two-stroke smoke, either." The way it used to be. And the way it still is—one day each year at Perris Raceway. —*Dain Gingerelli*

Pit Bits

Jeff Ward, the new AMA 125cc National Champion

Proving that green racebikes and determination can win championships.

• MX Champs: The 1984 AMA Motocross Champions include: Jeff Ward, Kawasaki, 125cc; Rick Johnson, Yamaha, 250cc; David Bailey, Honda, Open. Johnson won his title riding a modified production YZ250L, and according to Ken Clark, Yamaha's director of racing, Yamaha will continue its policy of racing what it sells. The firm's 1985 team will consist of the same riders, including Johnson, Keith Bowen and Broc Glover, "and possibly a 125 (class) rider," Clark said.

• MX World Champions: KTM factory rider Heinz Kinigadner clinched the 250cc MX World Championship at the Finnish Grand Prix. Honda's Andre Malherbe also wrapped up his third 500cc World Championship at the Italian GP, while Michele Rinaldi took the 125cc World Championship on a Suzuki.

• Gary Mathers, come on down: Former Kawasaki Superbike team manager Gary Mathers is American Honda's new director of racing. Mathers, who was released by Kawasaki last year because the firm suspended its roadracing effort indefinitely, replaces Toshiro Kezuka, who was promoted to American Honda's sales department.

• Add Mathers: Mathers' new job finally puts him and his old adversary, American Honda roadrace team manager Udo Gietl, under the same roof. "They (American Honda) considered me for the job," Gietl said, "but figured I was too technical. This job (race director) is more an administrative position. Besides, I'd rather be in the dyno room than behind a desk."

• Nail the coffin closed: Mathers' hiring by Honda pretty much confirms two rumors that have been running through the industry this year: First, that American Honda has every intention of continuing its race program in America. Second, that Kawasaki probably won't return to Superbike racing in the U.S. for at least another year.

• 114-horsepower RZ500: According to sources at Yamaha, there's a speed kit available to European RZ500 owners that will bump the already potent two-stroke's output to 114 horsepower. The kit, which is intended for racing purposes, includes new expansion cham-

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Pit Bits

bers, carburetors and pistons. But there's a chance that Americans will be able to lay hands on the hop-up parts, too; Ken Clark is trying to persuade Yamaha to bring the kits into this country. "I've requested that the factory make a horsepower *and* handling kit available here," he said. Such a performance kit would make the RZ500 an attractive candidate for Formula 1 racing, because the cost of the bike and speed parts would probably be several thousand dollars less than a Honda RS500.

• Yamaha TZ250M: It's almost certain that Yamaha will import at least 10 TZ250M roadracers into this country for 1985. And although the bike's design isn't final yet, sources at Yamaha say the company's patented Power Valve system won't be included on the quarter-liter racer. Moreover, the intake system will use case-induction reed valves, which, according to an in-house memo, increases the tiny-TZ's horsepower "up five" over the current piston-port/Power Valve L-model. No price has been announced, although Ken Clark indicated that it should sell for somewhere between $7000 and $9000.

• Honda RS250—Stage II: Apparently, American Honda was unhappy with the performance of the RS250 Sam McDonald campaigned this past season. McDonald met with fair success on the aluminum-framed two-stroke vee-twin, but according to roadrace team manager Udo Gietl, the bike didn't live up to its expectations. "Honda is building a new one," Gietl said. "It will be similar in design, but better." Gietl also said American Honda plans to import 10 of the new bikes, with a selling price similar to that of Yamaha's new TZ250.

• Kenny Roberts crashes: Shortly after retiring from motorcycle racing, three-time World Champion Kenny Roberts took some time off for a desert ride with friend Sparky Edmonson of Lectron Carburetors. And while playing in the dirt, Roberts fell and broke both his collarbone and thighbone. He was kept in the intensive-care ward for a couple of days, but is recovering now.

• Daytona Superbike 200: Daytona International Speedway has announced a major change for 1985. The Formula 1 event has been dropped from the 200-mile program, and will be replaced by the Superbike class. The F1 race, now 100 miles, will run on Friday—the traditional day for the Superbike race—and still will carry full Camel Pro Series status. The reason for the change, said Fred Seely, director of communications for Daytona Speedway, was to provide a better show for the spectators. "At this point in time," Seely said, "we feel that Superbike has more to offer the spectators than does Formula 1."

• Yamaha out of Daytona: Because of Daytona's race-shuffling for 1985, Yamaha's Ken Clark says there's a strong possibility that the company that has won the last 13 Daytona 200s will not be there to defend its title. "The AMA and Daytona Speedway have made it possible," Clark said, "for Yamaha to leave Daytona as winners. I have recommended to the president of this company that we not go to Daytona next year."

• Yamaha Superbike: While Yamaha might have lost interest in competing in Daytona's F1 race on Friday, there's no reason the firm couldn't make the 200 on Sunday with its new 750cc four-stroke sportbike. Nothing has been confirmed yet about the new bike's design, but one inside source says it does have four valves per cylinder. However, although the bike seems to be a likely candidate for the Superbike class, there are no plans for Yamaha to field a factory team—at this time.

• Shobert's seconds: Bubba Shobert, who was suspended for fighting with Terry Poovey in the pits at the St. Louis Shorttrack, July 7, paid his debt to the AMA (see Winners and Losers), and returned to the Camel Pro Series swinging. This time, though, Shobert did his fighting on the track, and placed second in four races in a row: the Hawthorne Mile, the Peoria TT, and both Indianapolis Miles. In the process, he helped teammate Ricky Graham open an eight-point lead—227 to 219—over Team Harley-Davidson rider Randy Goss, the defending Camel Pro Series Champion.

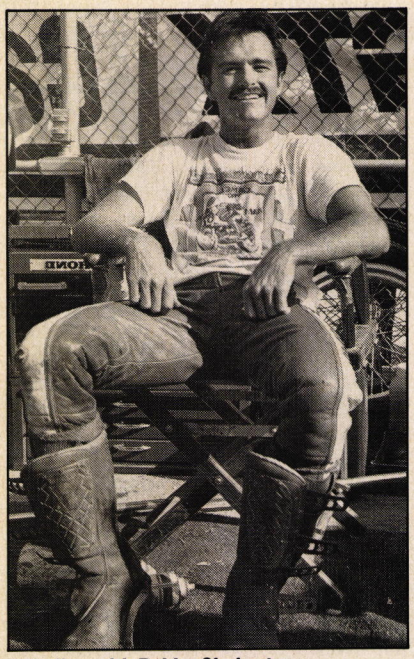
• Son of the Superbowl of MX: The conclusion of the Summer Olympics means the Superbowl of Motocross will return to the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, the site where stadium motocross began. The return race is scheduled for November 3, 1984, and will be the final round of the Wrangler Supercross series.

• Miller Time: Part of the welcome home party for the Superbowl will include the Miller Masters Challenge, a race that's open to 1984's Supercross winners, and several foreign riders, including the 125cc, 250cc and 500cc World Champions. The winner of the 10-lap race will tuck $30,000 in prize money in his wallet, while the remainder of the $50,000 purse will go to the rest of the field.

—Dain Gingerelli

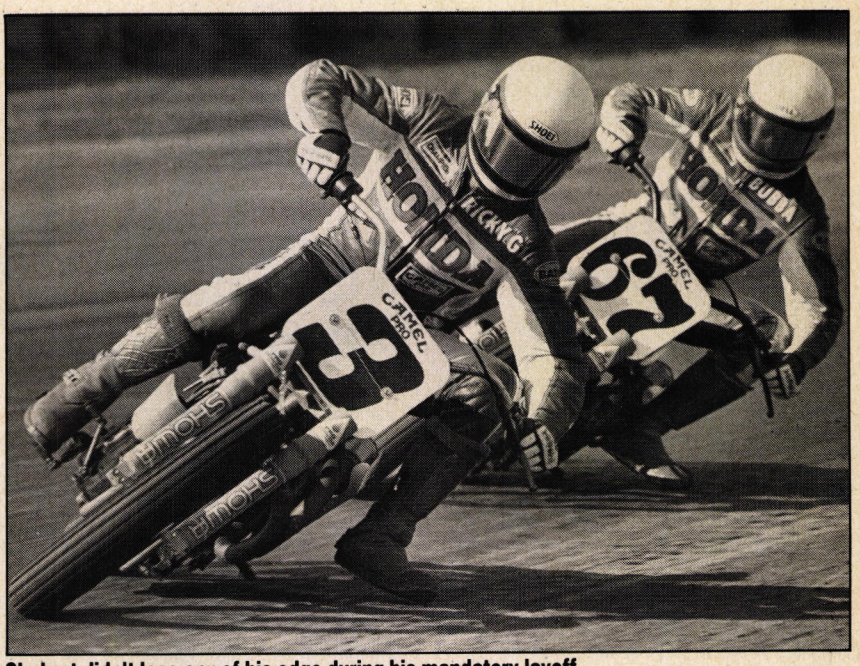
Bubba's Fine

Team Honda's Bubba Shobert makes a mistake, and pays.



All's fine with Bubba Shobert now

But he'd rather not sit out another.



Shobert didn't lose any of his edge during his mandatory layoff

He placed second behind teammate Ricky Graham (3) at Hawthorne.

• Camel Pro riders don't race for just a kiss from the trophy queen, but that's all Bubba Shobert got for winning the Hagerstown Half-Mile. The 20 Camel Pro Series points—and the first-place prize money—eventually were awarded to second-place finisher Randy Goss.

Shobert had to relinquish his winnings 11 days after Hagerstown, when an AMA appeal board decided he was guilty of instigating a fight with Terry Poovey in the pits at a previous Camel Pro Series race. Although Shobert was placed on suspension, he appealed, and remained eligible to race until an appeal board met to review his case. According to AMA rules, if the appeal board upheld the original decision by the race referees, Shobert would have to forfeit his winnings—trophies, points and prize money—accrued during the period of the suspension.

In Shobert's case, the appeal board met July 25. The AMA upheld the original $1000 fine, but reduced the suspension period from nine to six races. The reduction, said the AMA, was in consideration of a "clean riding record, which Bubba Shobert has held throughout his entire racing career."

Consequently, Shobert forfeited his Hagerstown winnings—trophy, prize money and points—to Harley-Davidson's Goss. The additional points for the *ex post facto* win temporarily vaulted the Team Harley rider into the CPS points lead, ahead of Shobert's Honda teammate, Ricky Graham.

The Ricky and Bubba Show

Shobert takes a back seat to Graham.

Shobert's altercation with Poovey proved to be a minor embarrassment for American Honda, but the company's immediate problem was the loss of first-place points. Honda's Doug Chandler did get bumped to second place at Hagerstown by the decision, but that couldn't make up for Shobert's loss. And because Honda is taking a no-holds-barred approach to winning the AMA's Manufacturer's Championship—a title that Harley-Davidson has held every year since 1976—those are points Honda is loath to lose.

As for his fine and suspension, Shobert paid his debt and sat out six races. But he certainly made up for lost time on his return: His first two races—the Hawthorne Mile and Peoria TT—resulted in second-place finishes behind teammate Graham. And at both races it was a Team Harley rider—Goss at Hawthorne and Scott Parker at Peoria—who finished third.

Shobert, then, restarted the season with a clean slate: He fulfilled his obligation to the AMA, and repaid his employer by helping turn around the points race. As he said shortly after the suspension was lifted, "We're still a team; there's a lot of races left (this season).... There's a championship to be won."

After the Peoria TT, Honda's Graham edged one point ahead of H-D's Goss for the No. 1 plate, while Honda maintained a 76-point lead over Harley-Davidson for the manufacturer's title. And with several races remaining on the CPS calendar, Battling Bubba has every intention of winning again. Only then it will be to pay back another debt: a debt he owes himself from Hagerstown.

—Dain Gingerelli

LETTERS *September kudos, Pink Interceptors and Moto-genetics.*

GOOD STUFF

The September issue on sportbike exotica was a knockout. Sportbikers around the country were waiting to read about the RZ500 and the sexy Bimota SB4. You covered them both, plus surveyed the European Supersport market. What a tour de force!

Now that the American motorcycle market is maturing, sportbiking is growing in popularity. It's only a matter of time until the Japanese deduce this and start sending over the good stuff.

Mark Uhryk
Dillsburg, Pennsylvania

The trickle has already started; see page 19—ed.

PLAYGUIDE?

I find a striking similarity in effect from your September article "The Untouchables" and the September Playboy article "Girls of the Big Ten." Both cause an inordinate amount of ogling and a frustrating desire to fondle (both the image and the real thing), not to mention the fantasies the photos conjure up. You show me sexy machines I can't ride and Playboy shows me sexy girls I can't. . . . Well, you see my dilemma.

Richard A. Hauser
Farmington Hills, Michigan

If it's any consolation, we didn't get to fondle them either—ed.

RZ CORRECTION

Thank you for your riding impression on Yamaha's RZ500 in the September '84 issue. I wish to make a correction and also a few observations.

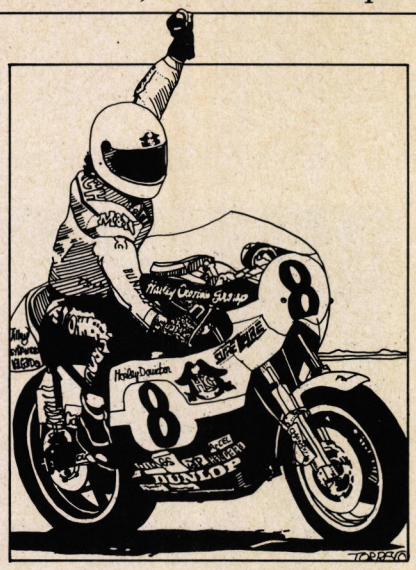
You state the top speed of your test RZ as 136 mph. According to your gearing chart, this works out to 8895 rpm in sixth gear. This is quite a ways from the RZ's 10,000-rpm redline.

The RZ500, as delivered, is jetted quite rich. However, after proper breakin and rejetting, my RZ500 has no trouble pulling redline in sixth gear, yielding a top speed of 152.9 mph before figuring for tire slip. Even in fifth gear, redline produces 140.4 mph, again before correction. Was your RZ jetted stock, and if so, were you informed by the importer (as I was) of the overly rich jetting?

Please print this, as I feel that the first 500cc street bike capable of an honest 150 mph deserves proper recognition.

C.R. Crouch
Lynchburg, Virginia

The information on the rich jetting came through after we had completed the test, and we were unable to retest the bike with leaner jetting—ed.



BIMMER QUERY

It was very gratifying to see your Bike of the Year award given to BMW's new K100RS. Being a former BMW owner, I was pleased to see your good taste given free rein. I think the K100 is the most beautiful motorcycle I have ever seen.

It would be nice is you could explain one thing to your readers. How can you give the Bike of the Year award to a motorcycle that you (to all appearances) have never tested? As for the bad taste you showed by chrome-plating one, may you receive a slap on the wrists with a 1949 Harley crankshaft.

Gary T. Wilkin
Costa Mesa, California

The decision was based on riding impressions from Europe, and after riding the K-bike we chromed.—ed.

SON OF HARD HEAD

The letter from Dr. Abramovitz ("Hard Heads," September 1984) couldn't be more on the mark. In the summer of 1982, my 9-year-old brother was flipped off the back of my father's Kawasaki Spectre. His helmet lost most of its paint, but his head was undamaged. In May, 1984, my father and I slid more than 1½ blocks on our backs. I am really thankful we were wearing our helmets. Anyone out there who would rather see his head torn up than ruin a helmet already has brain injuries.

Brooklyn Talbott
Kansas City, Kansas

FAST WOMEN

Every time I mount my trusty VF500F Interceptor and I get a little throttle-happy, (it's hard not to) I wonder what it would be like to race in a Grand Prix. Having greatly enjoyed your bit on 250cc GP racing (July '84), I was wondering if you'd consider doing a profile on some of the women in the sport (both professional and amateur). When I retired from competitive gymnastics three years ago, a large blank in the area of challenge and excitement was left; only to be filled by my VF. I no longer dream of kamikaze aerial stunts on a 4-inch beam; it's illusions of being Freddie Spencer's rival on a winding strip of tarmac. Even so, guys aren't the only ones out there, so let's hear a bit about the women who are trying to break into the field at the various levels. And no cracks about pink Interceptors, either!

Yvonne Hogendoorn
Ontario, Canada

We've covered women in the sport in the past, and will continue to do so. And we won't mention that your letter came in a pink envelope—ed.

NATURAL SELECTION

In reference to the letter by Dr. Abramovitz outlining the disadvantages of not wearing helmets, we feel the prochoice helmet laws also have a strong point that the good doctor failed to recognize.

People who do not wear helmets generally should not be riding motorcycles (plain and simple). By the process of natural selection, these people will be eventually weeded out.

So the next time you see your local motorcycling fanatic exercising his/her personal rights by riding without shoes, helmet, and gloves, be sure to smile and wave. These folks are supporting the best interest of the sport of motorcycling and the finer points of Darwin's theory of natural selection.

Tim Beal
Leon Berman
Chris Miyamoto
Tad Cornwell
Seattle, Washington

You made this discovery while accompanied on a Voyager with a beagle, no doubt—ed. ●

All letters must include the writer's name and address. Letters will be edited for length. Due to the volume of mail received, we regret we are unable to give personal responses.

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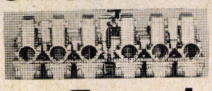

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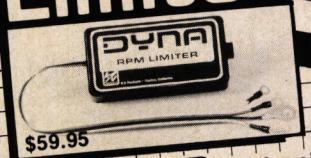

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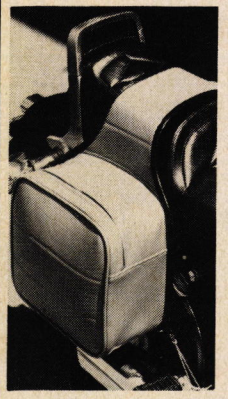

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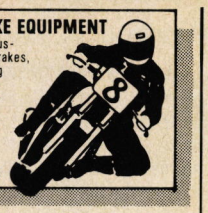

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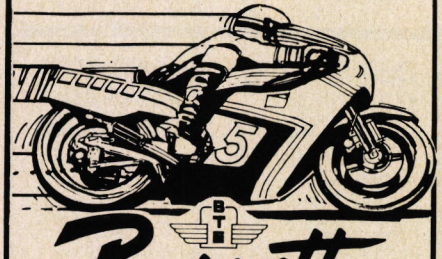

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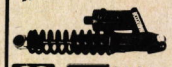

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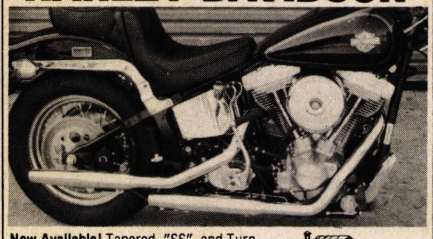
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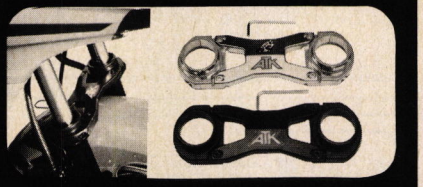
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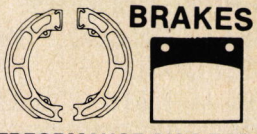
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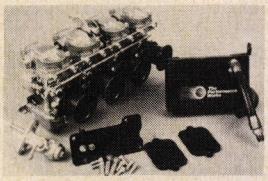
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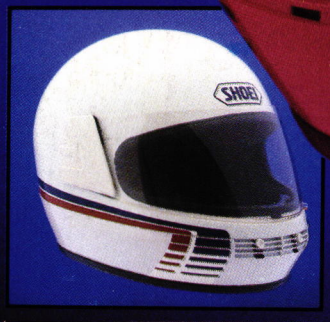

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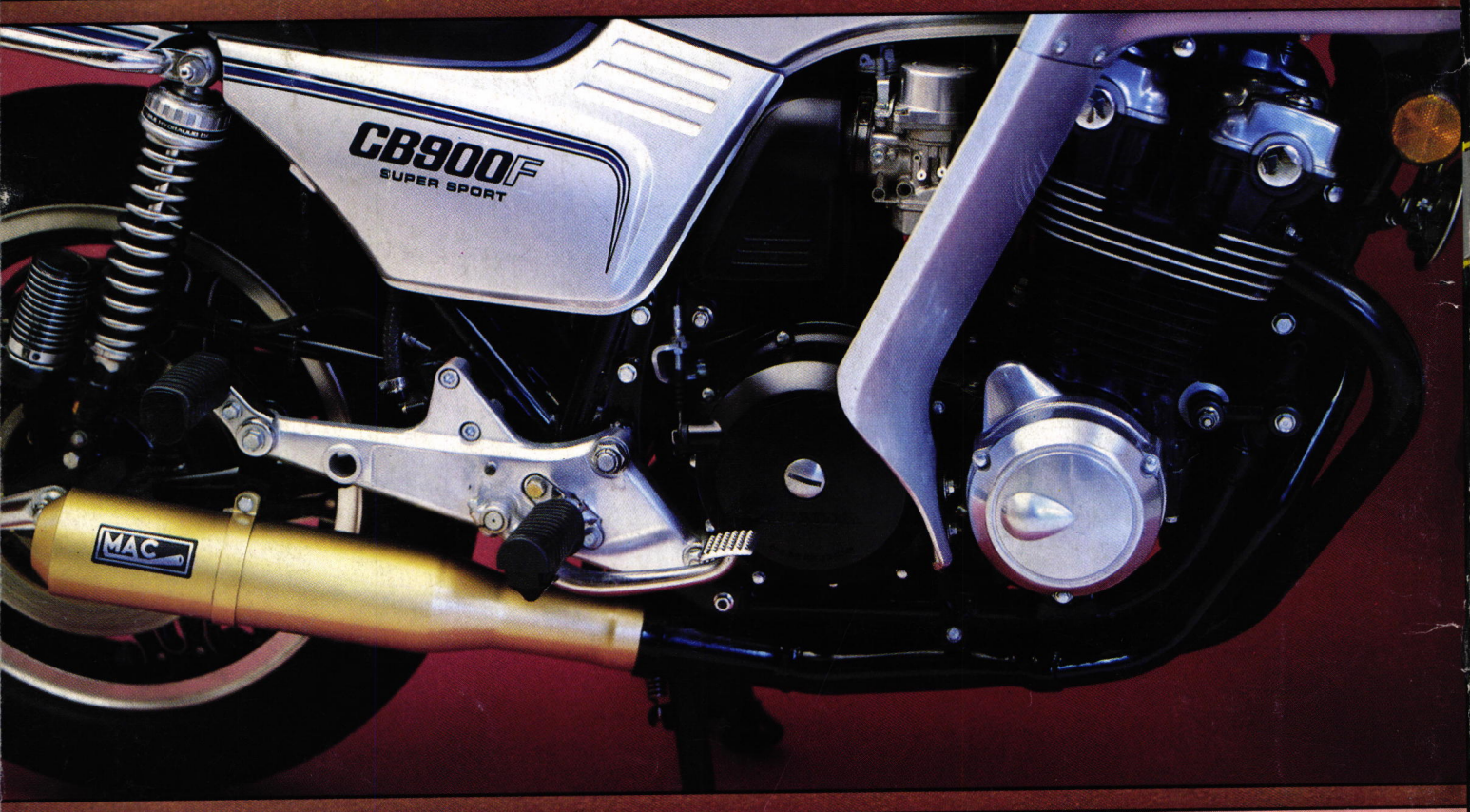

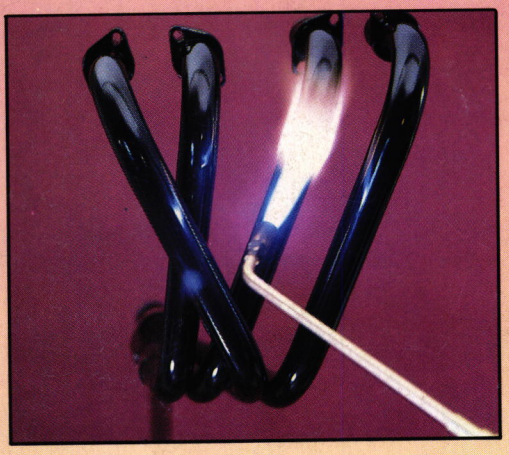

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